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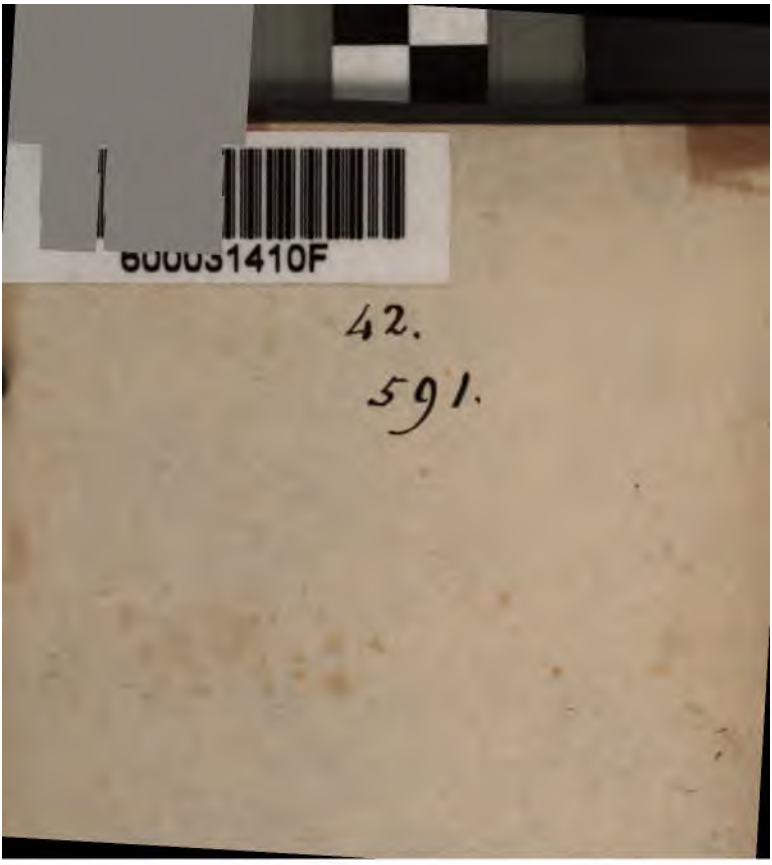
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THE

CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF CAVENDISH,

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN, NAVAL SURGEON, PORT ADMIRAL,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

"Lovelie, yet counting not her charmes,
Wise, yet pretending not to knowe,
Gentle in peace, unbending 'midst alarms,
Warm within Vertue, and beyond it snowe,
To her who brings this treasure to my arms
I for such sumless gifte more worlds of Love will owe,
Than Jove could rule or Titans overthrowe.
Passions are likened best to floods and streames,
The shallow murmur, but the deepe are dumb,
So when affections yield discourse it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come;
Then wrong not, dearest to my heart, my love for secret passion,
He smarteth most that hides his smart and sues for no compassion."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

T. AND W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1842.

591.

TO

SIR WILLIAM WEBB FOLLETT, M.P.

THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ADMIRATION AND RESPECT,

BY

HIS GRATEFUL AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

W. JOHNSON NEALE.

Temple, March 12, 1842.

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

"Now dawns the day and grimly sits
Fell Murder in the wind."—DARGLE.

THE day had dawned in storm and cloud upon one of those little inland seas which we are accustomed to recognize under the name of the Irish Lakes. At a comparatively humble house not far from the margin of the waters, temporarily resided a family of rank and wealth, who had sought that wild and romantic spot ostensibly for the superb fishing which the neighbourhood afforded, but in reality to soothe the

mind and mitigate the grief of the chief member of its ancient house.

The mourner was a young man still in the bloom of youth, possessed of title, riches, and all the usual adjuncts to happiness which we are so accustomed to worship as the sure harbingers of felicity.

Suddenly, while the sun of prosperity was shining full upon him, he had seen all his fair prospects levelled in the dust,—his dearest hopes converted into sources of the bitterest grief, and his fondest affections blasted. The unexpected death, from a chance fever, of his young wife, brought all this misery upon him.

She was a creature, by all accounts, beautiful to a miracle, and not less amiable in mind than she was exquisite in form. To these qualifications she added another, which both amiability and beauty too often want; but with which, when the other two combine, they clearly point out a being made to be idolized it is true, but yet one also, to whom fate in stern justice feels herself bound to deal some counterbalancing hard destiny—some melancholy struggle with

the woes of poverty or severest trial of the heart's affections! Ill-fated youth!—ye who are so blessed and yet so miserable as to meet a being of this description, shut your eyes and steel your hearts against the tempting jewel, and pass on! To possess it, is to share its penalty, and in proportion as the happiness of possession is too vivid for description, so also is it too brilliant to endure!

This deeply felt the husband, to whom we have alluded; and after the lapse of some considerable time, when reason seemed to have become obscured by grief, the necessity of once more slowly emerging into the turmoil of life for the sake of the two young children whom his wife had left motherless, induced him to struggle with his own agony, and seek out a distant relation as a sort of support in the arduous duty that devolved on him.

But fifteen months before the period at which our story opens, the mourner might have been selected as a model of manly beauty and well bred sprightliness. Now, a wasted figure—furrowed cheek—a neglected person, and dream-

ing vacant apathy of manner, only aroused to the consciousness of passing events by some strong effort, to relapse again when the stimulus was at an end,—these might have almost defied the remembrance of any friend who but a brief space since had beheld in the sorrower so different a man.

The rest of the family assembled at this spot consisted of the widower's two children, a beautiful boy and girl of the same age within a twelvemonth, together with his half-brother, and the son and wife of the latter. When we assert that the widower sought out his relative, we are partly wrong.

A total dissimilarity of dispositions had in early life placed a strong barrier between the two young men: the widower was some years the elder of the two, and the only child by his father's first wife. While yet very young, on the death of his mother, his father had married again, and the birth of a half-brother added one more to the family. The widower had scarcely completed his majority at one of the English Universities, whither his step-mother

had contrived that he should be early banished to avoid his influence with her husband, when that husband dying from the effects of a severe drinking bout, the young collegian came into the title and the estate; and the dowager, securing every valuable which she could dare to grasp, retreated with her jointure to some distant spot. Here, from mortification and want of breath, she soon followed, though with no great love nor affection, her liege lord to the tomb.

From his very cradle the dowager's son had always been taught, with his whole soul, to hate and detest the rightful heir,—to look upon him as one who not only stood in his path to fortune and enjoyment, but, as these people generally contrive to imagine, one who stood there most unjustly; and whenever he mentioned his half-brother's name, it was with just such a curse as Esau probably bestowed upon the smooth-faced Jacob.

Had there been any right in this complaining, Time would have soothed this bitterness; as it was, the general alleviator seemed only capable

tion as snow to the rain drop. On rallying a little from the first bitter grief of his wife's loss, the widower wrote and invited his half brother to come over to Ireland on a visit, and to bring his child and wife.

Some time elapsed before the last would consent even to consider the proposition; suddenly, however, she assented to it as readily as she had before stoutly opposed it, her husband endeavoured in vain to ascertain the cause of this change; the true motives of which she was quite determined to withhold, until an opportunity should arrive of securing his concurrence in them.

Possessed of a life annuity, charged on his half brother's estate, all the solid comforts of life might have been possessed by the younger son had he chosen to enjoy them, but the demon of ambition and envy had entered into his soul, and, in common with the majority of mankind, his whole heart was given to that which he neither did, nor could possess in honour, and the blessings really within his reach he in equal proportion neglected.

moved but by the gentlest zephyrs, while the sun, struggling feebly through the clouds that obscured it, shot down a solitary but vivid ray upon the waters, and then was lost in gloom:—a few more seconds and the whole surface of the lake was ploughed up into life by a succession of those gales so lately hushed, while the humble roof tree of the house, in which the fishing party were pausing in their tour shook and trembled as if conscious of the guilt that was planning within those tongueless walls.

"I tell you you never can have a likelier day for the consummation of your good fortune. Arise and secure it while yet within your power." As the wife of the younger brother uttered these words, she seated herself by the bedside of her husband, and endeavoured to rouse him from his slumber, as she whispered her horrible purpose in his ear.

"To day! no, not to day!" in the same stealthy voice, replied her husband, starting from his agitated sleep, and then as he met the stern gaze of the woman, closing his eyes as if to shut out the horrible images that she

called forth: then continuing his entreaty, "to day, no, no, do not press me for this horrid deed to day, I have no quarrel with him on my mind, nothing has enfevered my blood against him afresh. Unnerved by some new hate I do not think I should have cruelty enough; steeped, as he already is, to the very lips in woe."

"This has been your vain excuse, from day to day, and still you seek no cause to quarrel with him, and so gain that courage which you have not sufficient mind to command without."

"Nay in mercy, let him enjoy the brief space of life, till that occurs! It cannot possibly be long, as boys, a day could scarcely pass without some fresh-born feud!—the novelty of our meeting, and his recent loss have made his manners softer, when these wear off fear not some ancient grudge will break out, and in the sharpness of that animosity he shall die! I feel that I could do it then, although I falter now; my mind too will have become more used to dwell upon this horrible deed."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the woman, dashing

her hand against her forehead, starting from his side, and pacing up and down the room with uncontrollable fury, "Oh! that I should ever have united my destiny with such a faltering coward! This is the excuse with which you ever put me off, until soon, this creature's meek and soulless spirit will gain such hold upon your tolerance, we shall then hear affection talked of, as the poor excuse for fear! What need of a quarrel to nerve you in an act of firmness. Station, wealth, rank, all you most desire now lie within our grasp. By one slight act, so trivial in its deed, so easy in commission, so certified from all detection—a child would venture ton times more for ten times less a prize, and yet you dare not seize it. I need no quarrel to nerve me to the contemplation of the deed! What is the commital of the act compared to that resolution which forestalls it. The actual difficulty is not in acting but in planning murder."

"Hush! for Heaven's sake, these old walls——"

"Aye, there your cowardice broke forth afresh! you fear detection in the very wind that should bring safety and success, and that much over dreaded deed that you so lately planned, you now can scarce bear named, and yet you dream of courage! Psha, know yourself much better! I tell you once again, that all the crime lies in the thought and not the deed! When you kill a fly, you take a life! Did you create it? No! Can you replace it? Never! What more then is there in a man, than in the fly! This simple folly! The idle difference that your fancy makes. Away with such a vain distinctive line formed for a nursery barrier, nothing more to keep in children and weak tottering babes! If this promised justice is not done to day, we shall have lived too long together, both for your sake and for mine. I will no longer fold within my arms a cringing spirit lost to my respect; and you will render freedom to my tongue to jest at one who had what the world calls the wickedness to plan a brother's murder! without even the Devil's gift of courage to fulfil it."

"Peace, woman!" angrily replied the tempted man, "since nothing less will prove my earnestness, it shall be done; but mark my words, from this sad deed, we both shall reap a most ungrateful harvest! we neither of us know the strength of crime's most weary stream, till we are driven to breast it; nor can we dream how quickly fortune satiates her lovers, till her favours have been granted us."

"Oh! preach to the winds! these are the mere coward doubts suggested by our ill fortunes, to keep us back from great achievements, and which, as soon as we have gained success, all vanish in the heat of that bright noon."

"And if the attempt should fail?"

"Failure is impossible, all you have to do is to take him out well beyond sight upon the Lake, engage him heart and soul upon his sport, while you, placed at the helm, contrive to have the sheet made fast, then watch your moment when some sudden gust comes rushing down from those deep mountain gulleys. One motion of the rudder and our hope is won! Of

course the world can lay no blame on you, if being able to swim, you should gain the shore, while those untutored in the art, should only reach their graves."

"Well," said the younger brother, rising with a sigh, "would I had never listened to such a dangerous suggestion; but having done so, hell or my own foul spirit has so confused my mind I cannot clearly see how to evade it, or still worse fulfil it."

"Banish such a weakness, be but ready for the moment when it comes, and never fear it will be ready too for you!"

CHAPTER II.

Too wily to allow her victim to escape, now that he was fairly within the meshes of the web, she had so artfully woven for him, the unyielding temptress followed up her prey and scheme, and lost no opportunity in her power to make the latter successful in all its details. To too great an extent she was so. That morning the half-brothers embarked in the same boat accompanied by the children of the elder.

The authoress of this atrocious scheme, retired to her room elate with hope and confidence, to wait the successful issue of her diabolical hopes. Intent upon their accomplishment she watched the treacherous barque sail forth upon its deadly errand; already it had

gained a distance of two miles from the shore, and with every succeeding moment the unfeeling murderess implored fresh curses on the head of that confederate whose vacillation as she feared, would not allow him when the moment of trial came to carry into effect her deadly plan.

At last the boat's course was altered, now then the frightful consummation was about to take place!—but no—on—on—on—the boat still sailed, until at last its weather beaten canvass was hidden behind a small island in the centre of the Lake. What could the timid hesitating conspirator against a brother's life be wanting there? She feared,—she felt convinced he would postpone the deed till either conviction, or some other impassable barrier to its accomplishment, stole upon them to prevent its execution!

What if the brother had read his dangerous purpose in the other's bewildered eye or startling conduct, and had sought the island as a place of refuge? But, ah! her hopes beamed forth once more. The same dark sail again

shot out upon the dimpled waves, and stood stood straight off into the very stormiest part of those capricious waters! Yes, it was so; she saw now the deadly attainment of the morning close at hand. The little skiff was steered direct towards those lofty mountains, from whose immense ravines the wind every few seconds rushed down with frightful violence.

With the most eager and intense gaze she marked its treasonable progress, unable to take off her fascinated glance. Now or never was the moment to decide the fate of all.

The little island they had so lately left was already nearly three miles beneath their lee. The nearest land was the abrupt and inaccessible cliffs more than half that distance away to windward; which, even if the swimmer gained, afforded neither footing nor refuge.

Suddenly she perceived the pine trees on their summit bending to a blast more fearfully impetuous than any which had preceded it. Right on the course the little barque was pursuing, swept on the fury of the gale: a dark shadow preceded the torrent of wind as it

poured down upon the water; while the waves curled into glittering foam as it passed over them. With the sparkling delight of a demon, the eyes of the murderess glistened as she beheld the straining sail of the boat enter on this vexed strife of the elements; and suddenly sail, boat, and all belonging to them, disappeared from her vision, as if they had never been.

Starting in surprise, as though this were a cheat of the senses, she passed her hand across her eyes in doubt and bewilderment! Alas! even she, who had planned the whole, had little dreamed how swiftly murder may be done! Perhaps she had expected to see a fight, a struggle, a contention between the puny hand of man and the breath of his creator; but when a second sealed the doom she had so long plotted to achieve, it took some lapse of time to establish her belief that all was over!

It was only when the temporary gale had swept across the water, and left a few black specks where the lively sail so lately bounded forward, that she clasped her hands in secret and demoniac delight, exclaiming,

"That point is won at last."

And here the moment of her own acting had arrived. Hastily loosening her long dark hair from its confinement, to add a necessary terror to the scene, she rushed below with the most piercing shrieks among the servants; and in a manner scarcely intelligible, from the seeming wildness of her despair, gave notice that the boat had been upset upon the lake, and ordered immediate assistance to be dispatched to "the dear sufferers."——

And now for some years let us leave guilt to enjoy its hard-earned wages, and remorse to inflict its never-failing punishment.

CHAPTER III.

"Dawlish, with all thy dumps, I love thee still."

Who has not heard of the beautiful little village of Dawlish?

Situated in the centre of a large bay, which opens to the Channel, on the southern shores of Devon, few spots are more favoured by Nature, or more capable of calling up tender associations in the mind of the traveller.

Thither, when the golden thread of life is fast attenuating to dissolution, the fond and distracted husband bears his beautiful and consumptive wife to snatch at the last faint hope of prolonged existence.

There, when the summer is drawing to its close, may be found the lawyer or the statesman, repairing in peaceful seclusion, with the

breezes of ocean, the frame that long vigils or deep studies have impaired.

Thither also wanders the wealthy Indian whose soul the talisman of the pagoda saves not from the moth of ennui.—There the poor half-pay lieutenant ekes out the scanty pittance of an ungrateful country, and rears twelve young ladies and gentlemen, besides a mother, on ninety pounds a-year.

The sauntering dandy, the engrossed merchant, the starched soldier, and the careless seaman, all by turns appear on its parade, fill its lodging-houses, contribute their characters to the general scandal of the place, and then are seen no more.

There, also, may be sometimes found the far-wandering Cockney, vainly essaying with his wife and daughters, to wash off the blacks of London in the last waves of the mighty Atlantic.

There, many an arrow has young love shot! There, many a face among the loveliest on which the Deity ever breathed a portion of his own divinity, has beamed the radiance of its

smiles! On the soft breezes of those western shores, how many a tale of sweet devotion and burning passion has been borne!—Amid its romantic walks and most enchanting rides, how many a vow of unchanging fidelity has been interchanged!—How many a rapturous kiss been stolen!—To this even we ourselves are willing to bear witness—while hearts that have been severed there, to linger and to break in far off foreign climes, have in imagination, fondly haunted scenes of former bliss amid the ball-rooms and the baths of Dawlish—while last, not least, be it ever remembered, that there we endured for three long years, at the no great interval of twice a week, the untiring birch of the renowned Daddy Vevers!

Well remembered spot! should'st thou ever grow into the dignity of a franchise, who so well entitled to become thy sitting member as ourselves?—But to our tale, which, as it is one of true devoted love, requires to be approached with becoming delicacy.

Dawlish is situated in the centre of a valley, down the bosom of which rushes a little stream,

bearing the title of "the Daw," dividing the town into two portions, and emptying itself into the sea. From this point, the land trends off on either side, forming one of those numerous indentations that make up the great bay between Portland and the Start.

Standing on the last little bridge by which the Daw is crossed, the spectator who faces the ocean sees his walks terminated on the right hand by the romantic rocks designated "The Parson and Clerk," including what has been so long termed the Walk, the baths, and the greater proportion of those houses both on the beach and on the hill, in which the better class of the inhabitants and visitors reside. On the left hand, stretches away for two miles the chain of cliffs and sands bounded by a rock called "The Cobbler," under which, when the tide is out, the pedestrian is enabled to wander on the sterile but hospitable region of the warren.

And here let us pause to place within a grateful niche the bust of the generous Brutton. Sweet was thy orchard, blessed was thy cellar,

and bounteous thy mahogany, with a heart that beat all three! Fate, mindful of thy virtues, has bequeathed them, in all their warmth, to thy successor Ferreira.

On this side of the stream the traces of habitation were few and far between—the animated ball-room, the sounding billiards, and fondly-cherished store of fiction belonging to the library rooms of Mrs. Gore—stood on the very banks of the Daw, reflecting their painted columns and verandas, until they drew homage from the hearts of the very trout that shot beneath it.

This was the last link of civilization in the East—all beyond were daring colonists or unnoticeable savages—among the latter we must of course include the Preventive-house; while among the former it is scarcely necessary to place a gentleman, long known through successive ages, to the most distant parts of this our globe—need we name him? The man who built his house upon the sand, and not only upon the sand, but fortunately for his bricklayer, within reach of the high tides, so

that whenever the elements were strongly stirred, the winds roared, and the sea beat, down went the house; but as soon as ever calm weather came again, the worthy proprietor set to work with spade, shovel, and hod, and rearing up his edifice with surprising rapidity, was found all ready for the next gale.

At last, however, the wind and the waves growing tired of his pertinacity, seemed to have left the worthy man to his obstinacy, for some deferred and more fatal attack—but there, however, the house still stands, to the admiration of all coach passengers who drive behind it.

Much nearer, however, to the town, and in a situation of commanding beauty, stood another and far different residence with which our tale connects us.—To this we shall give the name of Cliffville.

About five hundred yards from the spot where the Daw meets the sea, abruptly rises the first of the series of red cliffs that form a continued wall to the Warren.

The height of the rock to which we allude may be something less than sixty feet, and

has been chiseled down to the sands with the utmost smoothness and abruptness, to guard against the intrusion of any one, ascending from below, the top had been levelled so as to afford an ample platform, walled in on every side, and laid out with considerable taste.

A grassy sward, rolled and attended until it bore the appearance of emerald velvet, was surrounded by an agreeable belt of trees, and interspersed with beds of flowers; while at a sufficient distance from the face of the cliff, to be quite secure from danger, and yet sufficiently near not to lose any of the beauty of the prospect, was built in the Elizabethian style, a commodious and antique-looking house.

From the windows of this dwelling was seen in every aspect of beauty or of terror, with the endless variations between each, the glorious ocean, with its perpetual canopy of sky, traversed by a thousand daily sails, and altered in its aspect by every wind that blew, and every cloud that passed.

To the right was caught just such a sufficient glimpse of the dwellings of man, as

sufficed to banish the feeling of loneliness or desertion, while the din of life was yet kept at so subdued a distance as to tender to the mind of the dwellers all the delicious luxury of seclusion and repose.

Cliffville was just such a spot as a contemplative and affectionate or romantic heart would have selected for the full but philosophical enjoyment of life, when the bitter fight of its ambitious struggle was ended.

Some feeling of this sort had induced its present possessor, Sir George Auberville, to ren it of the owner. Sir George was a naval officer of some rank and very high standing in the service: he had been employed with distinction for a number of years, achieved one or two of the most esteemed frigate actions then on record, and had the good fortune to be present in several heavy engagements. Wealth, honours, and esteem showered in upon him, and, more than all, he was blessed with a merry heart and cheerful disposition; but was he quite as happy as he professed to be? Our readers will be the best solvers of this question.

His only sister had married well and unhappily, as folks often do, to the Earl of Thornbush; separated after the birth of a daughter from her husband, she put on mourning as a widow, for the departure of the title to a distant and unknown member of the family, and the rest of her life was now devoted to the two chief objects of parental care—hoarding her money and spoiling her child.

After pursuing this double occupation some twelve years she departed, leaving behind her the young and beautiful Lady Siberia Sweetbriar; who, though only just verging on seventeen, already offered to the enraptured eye the budding beauties of womanhood. In form, a little above the ordinary stature of women, her figure was yet faultless and of admirable symmetry.

In her large and lustrous blue eyes, the experienced reader of mankind could peruse many a page of tender sympathy, deep passion, quick intellect and fiery feeling, as they alternately slept under the shadow of their long feathery lashes, or blazed forth in the full meridian of their own brilliancy.

Her glossy hair was almost black, but shaded or rather intermingled with chesnut, and clustered in rich masses round a snowy neck, long, full, and arching back like some bent column that yielded gracefully to the weight of a small but exquisite capitol. Her ingenuous and open disposition was exhibited in her expansive forehead, and the promise of long life dwelt in her firm and regular white teeth.

That she was not insensible to the happiness of life was shewn in the full red lip: and though there might have been a little too much temper in the fully developed chin, yet a fine Grecian nose and arched nostril bore witness to a lofty spirit capable of redeeming a trait otherwise productive of much misery.

Few who ever beheld her, whether admirers of her especial style of beauty or not, hesitated to place her foremost in the first rank of God's most exquisite creations—a beautiful woman; while all whose particular fancy lent them to the admiration of light eyes and dark hair, pronounced her to be unmatchable.

Alas! that Time should ever wither flowers so fair as these!

At the time when our story opens, Lady Siberia had arrived at her uncle's house something short of a month; but, brief as that time might be, the fame of her personal attractions had drawn admirers, gazers, worshippers, and discussers from every quarter of the little empire over which her beauty reigned, just as the perfume of some delicious fruit attracts in an incredibly short space every wasp and blue-bottle in its neighbourhood.

Like the wasps and flies however, the swarm we have mentioned were obliged to regale themselves on the perfume only of the prize. Sir George Auberville was what is termed an eccentric; that is, he had peculiar notions, with sufficient strength of mind to insist on his own way in following them.

Sir George admired the beauty of his niece as much as any one, but whether from a notion of retaining her entirely for himself, or simply from a hatred of all fops and flutterers, or perhaps, because he thought that when his sister died it was only decent to be a little affected by the event we know not; the result was the same—

he wished his niece to live a very retired life, and she did so; and beyond a few stray glances of her magic features, an occasional glimpse of her lovely form at a shop, and one or two evening walks along the public promenade while leaning on her uncle's arm, the world at large had little opportunity of delighting themselves with the contemplation of that beauty, the witchery of which, taking its first rise in the reports of servants and a few select friends, at last grew into the acknowledged creed of the place.

But though thus baffled in the close approach that they desired, her adorers still persisted in talking of the absent fair as vociferously as if they had been on the most intimate terms with her. Every one knew how exquisitely she sang; all could attest how strong and perfect was her love of painting; her powers of conversation, pleasing manners, lively wit, and piquant observations, were admitted on all hands.

One, however, there was, far apart from this noisy, thoughtless crowd, who took a far deeper interest in the question of Lady Siberia's per-

fections, than any of the gay and flippant votaries of idleness and fashion we have named; one in whose prayers her name and welfare were softly and holily mentioned, as oft as midnight laid her mantle on the ocean; when the ephemera of the day had retired to their idle dissipations; when their transient and empty hum no longer vexed the ear of nature; but the broad and mighty voices of the winds, and the distant murmur of the falling sea, combined to form the eloquent music of the Deity.—

One who had enjoyed, because he had more intensely watched for them, opportunities of beholding the beautiful girl we have named, far before any of those more nearly approaching to her own rank;—one, in whose cherished dreams her noble figure and expressive countenance formed the perpetually recurring and chief image;—one, who woke before the sun to enjoy the exquisite delight of rearing fairy structures of hope and affection, in every shrine of which temples the worshipped image was our heroine;—one, who knew too well the frightful obstacles in his path towards success,

had sighed over them in his despondency, had admitted their supremacy in his despair, and had wasted to a shadow of his former self in the vain effort to conquer the passion that consumed him;—one, finally, who, discovering how hopeless was the effort to subdue his passion, had ultimately resolved to gain the almost unattainable object of his hopes, or die in the attempt.

It was a desperate resolution!—Nothing but temerity could suggest, or heroism achieve it. Throughout this arduous struggle to its eventful close, our story leads us as spectators.

Out of similar materials, and from such a strife, the world has often seen arise the best and brightest efforts—the worthiest and most lasting fruits that genius or valour can produce. Who, therefore, shall venture to decide that it is either unamusing or uninstructing, to watch the career so often run before with glory and success?

The mischances and indomitable energy of even so revolting an insect as the spider, nine times renewed, awoke in the breast of Scot-

land's most renowned monarch the chord that vibrated to victory at Bannockburn, and rescued a kingdom and a crown from subjugation. So watching the toils and determination of others, in whatever path pursued, we inhale fresh spirit to meet our own peculiar difficulties,—we gather renewed hope for our own individual battles; and more than all, we learn to conquer the greatest enemies to all human advancement, the doubts and distrusts of our own bosoms, which, like traitors in the camp, too often send forth our forces to the fight, unnerved by the anticipation of defeat, an easy conquest to the first stout foe that meets us.

CHAPTER IV.

And who-then was the hero who had girded up his loins for the unequal fight,—whose was the lofty soaring spirit that from a low estate could resolve on gaining this beautiful, accomplished, high born heiress? Whence came he?—from whom born?—how designated?—In short, what was he?

Do not laugh, dear reader—I really beg you will not. He was—a cobbler!—Ah, but such a cobbler! Yet let not this derogate from the high esteem a hero should ever hold in the imagination of a true and devoted novel reader. Our's was a cobbler of a peculiar kind.—The patent of his nobility came direct from nature, and no one that inspected the sigil could for an instant doubt the fineness of the impression or the divinity of the hand that sealed it.

To the end that all these matters may, however, fully, fairly, and impartially appear, it will be necessary that we refer to a period in our story shortly previous to the ever-memorable advent of the beautiful Lady Siberia to Cliffville.

We know not, reader, if it has ever been your lot to sojourn at Veale's Hotel, and contemplate the daily beauty of Mrs. Knighton's shop with its large circular board, still so dear to our remembrance, of "CIRCULATING LIBRARY,"—from whence we first obtained the "Life of Nelson,"—that lured us like a false luminary over the raging sea; but if so, you will remember a hill winding away to the left of the Hotel, expressly designed and retained by nature and by man, for breaking horses' knees and children's necks.

On the top of this hill—having a large family—prudently dwelt Edward Tyler, called by his friends a Cobbler, more gently designated by himself a Shoemaker. Having thus stated his calling, it is unnecessary that one or two facts should be added,—to wit, that he was rarely at home, never at work, and always drinking.

It is also a matter of surplusage to assert that he was a violent politician;—all cobblers imbibe this taint with their leather.

In one respect, however, Noisy Ned—as he was somewhat freely designated—differed from the generality of his tribe; Ned was a staunch Conservative, or, as he termed it, an Admirer of the Constitution in the Pitt School. He also said he had a stake in the country; a fact, unhesitatingly admitted by his apprentice, who had often seen him beat his wife with it.

As the devotion of a matter of such constitutional boast to the welfare of one individual, evidently proclaims her to have been a person of striking consideration, at least in her husband's eyes, we shall take leave to enquire who and what the lady might be who was thus protected by her Tory—I beg his pardon—by her Conservative husband.

Although the mother of several children, Mrs. Tyler was still a young woman, not more than seven and twenty, and retained as much of her former good looks as sorrow and ill usage had combined to leave her. She had originally

come to Dawlish as lady's maid in a respectable family.—Noisy Ned was then foreman at the most fashionable shoemaker's in the place; a smart, spruce, and fluent young man, displaying an agreeable and clever cast of countenance. With these attractions, he soon contrived so to mystify the lady's maid as to induce her, on her family's quitting the watering place, to stay behind and become a votary of Hymen.

Bright visions of fine shops, large assortments of fancy shoes, swarms of customers, fine dresses, and overflowing business; gradual accumulation of capital, and, through every stage, an agreeable and most loving husband—had contributed to this "untoward event." But, alas! she quickly discovered there are some dispositions which, if incapable of exertion for themselves, are still less capable of exertion for others.

The Dawlish season was just over as poor Maria entered the state of wedlock: it would never do for her lord and master to abandon the wages of a foreman, and set up a fine shop in the worst part of the year. His family, who

had, as he asserted, like himself, a stake in the country, would require some little time and persuasion, before they would come down with the requisite advances—capital and so forth.

To arguments like these, Maria, who, bating that unreasonable thing, her love for Master Ned, was really a nice, sensible little creature, readily gave way. The intervening months rolled on; Christmas laid its snows upon the surface of the ground, while death fertilized its bosom.—Maria's mistress, who had been much attached to her, and had indeed brought her up from childhood, died suddenly, leaving no family. The widower set off, as widowers will, to Lord knows where; and the pretty lady's maid, though grieved to lose so valued a friend, found all her love increased by the double tie of having no one to depend on but her husband, and the approaching bitter joys of maternity.

Strange, however, to say, many further months did not pass by without developing some unfortunate traits in the character of that guardian of the Constitution, her husband.—He had a strange taste for discussion,—liked

laying down the law,—thought a "knowledge of the world" and a "moving in society" necessary for his character, and essential to his reputation.—These feelings led him to the refined step of visiting the pot-house.

By degrees, to her astonishment, Maria discovered that the parlour of the Red Dragon possessed more charms in her husband's eyes than her own: she marvelled, wondered, could not believe it,—gently remonstrated, and discovered, to her indignation and bitter grief, that the clever Ned was a man of much manual dexterity, and in came the operation of that stake in the country to which we have already alluded.

This brought on a violent rebellion; she raised the whole neighbourhood—at least, the four next houses; and the *posse comitatus* of matrons having assembled in her sitting room,—when the danger was over and her husband gone,—she thanked them warmly for their timely interference, and they kindly ordered a bottle of gin at her expence. By way of convincing her of the great cause she had for gra-

titude, she was next considerately informed by the surrounding ladies, that they wondered and always had wondered greatly, what she could see in Noisy Ned to choose him :—that he had no more chance nor reasonable expectation of setting up a shop than he had of setting up a new moon, or an opposition sun ;—that, as to his family, he was born and bred in a work-house, where his father and mother died, and whence he himself was bound out apprentice by the parish, and had succeeded so far by that manual dexterity of which she had received such strong proofs ;—that he had no other relations besides herself ; and as for money coming to him, the thing was about as probable as that it should rain treacle and sulphur for the especial benefit of children with the chicken rash.

Mrs. Tyler, of course, wept oceans at hearing these sad facts, which her friends observing, finished the gin as rapidly as possible, with perpetual exclamations of " poor thing," and having already exhausted the worst of the truth, they kindly commenced drawing on imagi-

nation for some darker touches of the picture. By their account, Ned was little short of a demon, and hopelessly given to all sorts of worthlessness; — this, however, Mrs. Tyler never heard,—her heart was almost broken by the banishing of the fairy vision of the shop, extremely well furnished and most bountifully stocked, with a very pretty young woman at one end wearing a remarkably becoming cap, with one or two fashionable gentlemen admiring her from outside, very respectfully of course, while she wrote down the measures, pronounced by the well-dressed and intelligent proprietor.

We say that the thawing of this fairy frost-work engrossed her mind so completely that she scarcely heard, and certainly did not heed the slanders of her lord, by her present friends, until, at the conclusion, one venerable lady kindly asserted that Mr. Tyler's evening absences were less attributable to the parlour of the Red Dragon, than to the lodgings of a certain good looking young woman, to whom Mr. Tyler had been paying his addresses before his marriage, and whose fair fame had suffered

very considerably by her renewing their intimacy since.

Rage, now took the place of grief, and a feeling of anger and revenge, which all the brutality exhausted on her own person, had failed to call up, here sprung into life with astonishing fury.—The matrons applauded, felt for, sympathized, would do any thing but assist her, except by way of counsel, and having bountifully supplied her with this, indeed, so much so, as to map down the whole campaign for the next twelve months, she, acting on their advice, resolved to lock her husband out all night, put her plans in operation, on the departure of her allies, loosened her pretty eyes in their sockets by intense crying, and kept her word by refusing to unlock the door on her spouse's return at midnight. The lock stood, but the door did not—Noisy Ned, having applied his foot to the centre of the panel, entered in savage triumph, and vented his whole wrath upon his victim, which wrath she by her first and last resistance only made more brutal and severe.

Some kind neighbour, with the view of assisting the wife, carried the intelligence by break of day to the master; the master remonstrated and admonished. The admirer of the Constitution thinking there was no other workman like himself in the world, much less the paltry circle of Dawlish, answered very saucily, and received, much to his surprise, a week's wages and dismissal in reply.

All this misfortune was of course set down to his wife, who had the immediate pleasure of not only bearing the brunt of his temper, but testing the duration of his hatred as well as the transient nature of his affection. Ned now determined to set up in opposition to his master, in order to what he called, spite the old thief.

This his reputation as a good workman enabled him to attempt—he found a landlord silly enough to entrust him with a small house at the beginning of the season, carefully looked up all his master's old customers whom he had ever served, got a very fair sprinkling of orders, and might by great attention and industry

have struggled on.—Unfortunately however, the society of his wife had lost every particle of attraction, and Ned becoming impressed at this time with the imminent danger by which the Constitution was threatened, gave up much time to forming an Anti-Jacobin Society, to meet at the Red Dragon, every night, under his auspices as Chairman, consigning to Maria, who knew nothing of the matter, the care of his customer's orders; she having nothing else upon her hands except the making of a complete set of baby linen.

Under these difficult circumstances the Constitution certainly did seem likely to be saved; that was a great blessing!—and though many of the customer's orders went wrong and were revoked, still Ned, to make all amends for it, lost no opportunity of pressing for payment from those who had obtained what they desired.

Ungrateful people! they resented this, and came to him no more,—the landlord dunned for rent, the workmen for their wages, the butcher and the baker refused further credit,

and the "Red Dragon," roared for its score.—The latter, Ned said was a public duty, and therefore his last ready money was very consistently swallowed by the rubicund beast, in liquidation, and his landlord having turned him out of his house for arrears, retained also what little furniture he had put in it.

Ned's wife was by this concatenation of evils most unluckily brought to bed, just at the very time when her spouse had no bed to bring her to,—the dream of the master workman was at an end,—Ned had no resource but to return to journeyman's wages, and these gradually getting worse and worse, from the political associations of the worker, Ned seemed to thrive in nothing but the practical defiance of Malthus, and gradually sunk to the tenancy of a stall, and the paternity of six small children.

While on his downward road to this point of degradation, a stranger arrived in Dawlish, to apprentice out two children, a boy and girl, both being young, and the girl being the elder of the two.

The man who brought them was a dark, moody, sinister looking being, who said little to any one; and though curiosity was greatly aroused as to himself and his mission, from his having arrived in the winter when there was not much else to furnish food for scandal, his taciturnity while it increased, still defied the public debate of his immediate neighbourhood.

It is true that his little charges, were arrayed in dirty clothes, and, in everything but the delicacy of their beauty, appeared to belong to the lower orders. But there was something in the fair, dejected, and staid countenances of the two children, that accorded strangely with their style of dress. In their movements there was a gentle quiet grace, unlike the boisterous romping of animals, left wholly free to youth and nature for their guidance; while still stronger mark than all, in their language could be detected no particle of that provincial dialect, which stamps the children of uneducated persons. On the contrary, every thing they uttered, was grammatical and correct, and though of course not beyond their tender years,

still their expressions, idiom, and intonations were such as could only have been formed among people fully acquainted with and accustomed to use grammatical accuracy.

The boy, chance directed to become the apprentice of noisy Ned; Ned said, because he —Ned— was so highly recommended, but kindly neighbours were not wanting to insinuate that Ned was selected as being the most likely person by starvation and ill treatment, to get rid of that which was evidently put off as an incumbrance.

The sister was very quiet in her manners, and promised to display great personal charms, if these were not rendered coarse by labour and exposure; she was placed with the Matron of the House of Industry. Various motives were assigned for this selection, and, amongst the rest, that, as it was impossible that any individual could be interested in each orphan, she would here stand the best chance of finding neither friends nor protector.

Be that as it may, no surname was given to the children, but that of James, and though

the man who thus disposed of their fortunes, asserted himself to be their father, and gave a very minute but distant address, no one who looked at their fair faces, and then at his dark scowling visage, could for one moment credit the assertion.

However, there they were, both bound for years, seemingly to the lowest segment of Fortune's wheel, and from that time forward no tidings were ever heard of the mysterious and repulsive agent, who had chained them there.

CHAPTER V.

Such as we have just described, was the unsatisfactory history, and low position of our hero,—for such we confess must be recognized in Noisy Ned's apprentice. At the period when our tale commences, the whole style of thought and expression which distinguished him, was, as the reader perceives, far superior to the sphere in which we find him, this fact arose from circumstances, partly inherent, and partly accidental.

The calling of a cobbler is one, which, in the common acceptation of the world, rarely, to use a law phrase, "raises any presumption" of esteem or respect. Dirty in its immediate mode of pursuit, mean and insignificant in its first result, and followed, as it generally is, by men given to habits of drunkenness,—dis-

sipation, idleness and brawl, it nevertheless, is not less singular than true, that it is a calling, from which have risen many men of first rate intellect.

How this is rightly to be accounted for, we do not undertake to decide; it certainly is one of the very few sedentary trades, followed by men, and if we examine into this train of argument, we shall perceive that in proportion as the professions and callings of men are sedentary, so also in proportion, is the quantity of intellect displayed in them. By this, we do not mean to assert, that there is anything in the act of session which can further intellect, or convert a dull mind into an acute one, or else the Council of Nice, which sat till their sitting places were sore, or the Lord knows how many hundred years, would have produced the very acme of wisdom, instead of something very nearly the reverse; but this inference certainly does seem fair, that it requires a certain quality of mind to embrace and to remain content with callings and professions of such limited indulgence, and great monotony, as

all sedentary professions and callings must necessarily be—this point granted, the comparative quiet of such pursuits affords great opportunity for the cultivation of thought, which a partial and quiet manual occupation tends rather to promote than to interrupt. Of this disposition was our hero: Nature, who is far more equitable in her distributions of personal blessings, than we are generally willing to admit, had with a weak and ailing frame, given him a most capacious head and noble heart. The object of those who had enslaved him, as they thought, to the mean obscurity of one of the lowest trades, would undoubtedly have been fulfilled and carried out, even by the unfortunate victim himself, had not his disposition happily frustrated such a design.

Had he in the slightest degree abandoned himself to the low, rude pleasures of the calling to which he had been bound; had he once imbibed the least taste for drinking and the low pot-house society in which noisy Ned felt himself so happy, he would have built his own grave among that ignoble portion of mankind, and

never have emerged into a brighter sphere. But for this, nature had not designed him.

Naturally thoughtful and serious, our hero's occupation nursed one part of this temperament, while the sorrows of the household into which he had been brought, increased into deep melancholy the second. Feeling unpossessed of strength to cope with his brethren of the craft, and disliking their unrefined habits, Charles naturally turned his attention to other amusements.

One of the most prominent parts of his disposition, was an intense love of beauty, and often, when seated at his humble work he observed wander past through the street, the various well dressed and blooming visitors by which Dawlish is so often thronged, a feeling of agony and despair crept over him to think of the insuperable bar intervening between his station and theirs, and that if ever his life was to be blessed by the soothing attentions of woman, his lot must be cast, not with the elegant, the accomplished and the beautiful, but with some humble unpolished drudge, from

whom, however amiable, all the finer perceptions of his soul would revolt.

This train of feelings first induced him to consider how and in what manner he could over-climb the barrier that enclosed him among objects that he detested, and which threatened to involve him for life in a labyrinth whose details were repugnant to every feeling of his soul—conscious that whatever steps were taken to gain his point, it could only be achieved by superior mental acquirements, his first effort was to free from its present thralls the mind, and then to trust to that for enabling the body to follow its example.

In such a complete state of ignorance had he been kept, that not even the slightest knowledge of his alphabet had been ever imparted to him; and therefore it is scarcely necessary to add, that he could neither read nor write; a feeling of degradation accompanied this painful state of mental darkness, and not wishing to apply to any one to be taught at his age, he availed himself of a few pence made in extra hours to buy a spelling book, and then, when-

ever he imagined himself unobserved, he employed himself in copying upon the leather with the point of his awl, the various letters of the alphabet, referring to his sister for instruction and assistance whenever necessary—no infrequent matter.

With most painful laboriousness and wonderful industry, he gradually succeeded in perpetrating a sort of language of his own;—in hieroglyphics certainly, among the most strange that had ever yet been produced. At length these humble efforts were detected by Mrs. Tyler, who insisted on affording him the best instruction which her limited knowledge of the art allowed; for still amid her fairy dreams of the elegant shop, &c. it had been part of her erroneous conviction that she was destined to keep the books; although not one of the best orthographers in the kingdom, she still was able in Charles's sight to achieve wonders with her pen, and having been accustomed to read her mistress to sleep in one or two long illnesses, she was a still better lecturer.

Under this tuition, then, Charles commenced

his studies, and the opportunity once afforded him, rapidly shot ahead of his instructors. His manners were of that gentle and forbearing kind, on which nature seems to have fixed its own original refinement, and which no contamination or bad example can corrupt or mislead.

Amongst the humble friends he made by their mild influence, was a hard-hearted old stick of an animal, between a Jew and a Non-Entarian, who made his livelihood by purchasing anything of anybody, by which he was likely to cheat any person to any amount. His chief line of business was in buying from the various school-boys, all their books, which he invariably exposed in the front of his window with their names conspicuously paraded, if such happened to be attached to them.—By this means the parents or school-masters had the greater facility in arriving at the ownership, and Abel Morris the chance of wringing a larger sum from these than any other parties.

In some peculiarly soft or virtuous hour, Charles' full melancholy eye, peering with a

longing lingering gaze into his shop window, struck Abel Morris with compassion; and as he watched him perusing the title pages of one stupid old uninteresting book after another, and then, venturing timidly to look into the contents, some indistinct, but extravagant effort of generosity floated before him; and at length the lean, old, withered miser, (I think I see him now, wrapt in his grey morning dressing gown and slippers, whatever might be the hour, from sunrise to sunset,) came out from his cobwebbed den, and in his own hesitating fearful way, began the colloquy by asking,

"I say, young man, are you as fond of books as you appear to be?"

"If possible, still more so, Sir."

"Aye, truly? Have you any then to sell me?"

"No! indeed, Sir; I have not any, even to read, and as to selling, if I were so fortunate as to have a book of my own, I think I should like to sell my blood first."

"Ah! ah! You're a very proper young man; I wish all the world were like you; it

almost breaks my heart, to see parties come here to me, and part with old books that have been in their families, perhaps 50 years; and as to selling books myself, upon my soul and conscience, I'd rather—there—upon my conscience and my soul—I'd rather want victuals for a week—your name 's Charles James—you're the apprentice of noisy Ned the cobbler, a'nt you?"

"Yes! Sir, I am."

"Aye! young man, take my advice, cultivate learning, cultivate learning; Solomon says in his Proverbs, it's better than house and land. Do you know Solomon's Proverbs?"

"No! Sir, I do not."

"Aye! you should know Solomon's Proverbs, they're quite an education to a young man, let alone anything else; I never knew a gentleman yet, that had Solomon's Proverbs rightly by heart, that didn't walk ahead, like a young Jew orange boy; I've a copy I can sell you very cheap."

"Sell, Sir! Lord love you; I couldn't afford to buy a halfpennyworth of salt; the last time

I even saw any money was a fortnight ago, and that was only three farthings."

"A halfpenny? a halfpenny's a large sum, young man; well, and so you've got no money?"

Charles shook his head.

"Never mind, money will come by-and-bye, I'm glad you're fond of books; I always like to encourage study; what would you say if I was to lend you a book from time to time."

"Lend me, Sir?" said Charles, scarcely believing such generosity could exist in the world.

"Yes! I said lend you."

"But do you mean, Sir, to lend me, without my paying any money for it."

"Aye! without payment of a farthing, out of my own spontaneous generosity."

"Oh! Mr. Morris!" exclaimed Charles, clasping his hands with extasy—"I'd pray for you every night and morning of my life."

"Oh! pray! pray! pray! pray for me, pray! um! ah! Well that sort of thing's all very well in its way: but 'pon my soul and conscience it's a queer sort of mode of shewing

one's gratitude, 'pon my conscience and my soul it is, pray! pray! I should be sorry to give you so much trouble as all that 'ud come to."

"Well, Sir! what could I say more?"

"Um! well! that's another matter! Haven't you a great deal of spare time, Charles?"

"I have some, not a great deal, Sir."

"Ah! I knew you had spare time, I knew you must have, or else you couldn't read you know. Now I'm a very poor man and I can't afford scarcely enough to get myself a dinner now and then; suppose you and I were to come to an arrangement, that if you mend a shoe or two of mine occasionally, I'll lend you my books to read."

"Oh! Sir! I'll do that cheerfully."

"Very well, then; it shall be so; you mend all my boots and shoes, and I'll lend you my books."

"Agreed, Sir."

"Well! agreed; but remember, Charles, among my shoes, of course I include my poor old housekeeper's, she is an old woman, doesn't go out much, can't wear out a great deal. Aye,

you may look, but 'pon my soul and conscience she doesn't."

"Well, Sir, then I'll include her."

"Aye! do, there's a good boy, and of course with her goes in my little nephew Jack."

"Your little nephew Jack, Sir?'

"Aye! Jack, you know little Jack."

"Little Jack, Sir, why he's a roaring boy of thirteen years of age, and would wear out a shopfull of shoes in a month; no, Sir, I can't have anything to say to Jack."

"No! well! well! p'raps I didn't think of that; well, at any rate, you'll take into the bargain his poor old mother, Tabitha, because she's blind. I don't suppose Tabitha ever does put on shoes, except once a week, and that's Sundays."

"This is rather hard, Sir."

"No, 'pon my conscience and my soul it isn't."

"Oh! yes! indeed it is, Sir, but however, as I would willingly go through any slavery to get on with my reading, I'll try it; but you must

remember, Sir, you'll have to buy your own leather, wax, threads, wax-ends, brads and so on."

"Oh! no! Charles, oh! no—they're included in the bargain of course; upon my soul and conscience they must be."

"That they never shall be, Sir; for, though I'd rather starve than remain as ignorant as I am, still rather would I not know one letter of the alphabet than take my master's materials to make up my private bargains; and as to laying out money in buying new shoe leather, I'd much rather spend the same sum in buying my own books, so, Mr. Morris, I wish you good morning."

"Stay, Charles, stay; there's no hurry to go away yet, you know; what you've set up is an argument; arguments should be considered. I own the matter didn't appear to me in that light before; but still, there is something in it, there *is* something in it, certainly; when you come to look very closely into the matter;—but are you sure, Charles, if I trust you with the materials, you won't cheat me."

"Cheat you," repeated the apprentice, the colour rising on his pale cheeks, "if I wouldn't cheat my master, against whom I have so much opportunity, it's not very likely I should try and cheat a keen man like you, if you think that's probable, don't try me."

"Stay, Charles! stay, can't you hear a philosophical argument without getting so peppery on the subject? Well, then, you may choose your own book to begin with, and I will send you some shoes in the evening; and to-morrow morning you can let me know how much leather you want and so on—now what book do you want? tho' 'pon my conscience and my soul you're a regular hard bargainer."

Without noticing this last insinuation, which came so gracefully from Abel Morris, young Charles selected Pope's Homer's Iliad, and bore the prize in triumph to his home.

From this time the mental culture of the apprentice proceeded rapidly. With that enthusiasm which was part of his character, he worked day and night to effect some extra

labour; rose with the lark to secure a brief interval for himself, in which to study; and when secure from any interruption from his master, might often be seen working at his stall with his book open before him, intently devouring its subject matter with his eyes, while his hands plied vigorously the task it was his duty to perform. Every spare moment he could snatch, and by far the greater portion of the time allotted to his meals, were all devoted to filling his mind with the varied store thus collected at random from every volume to which chance directed his attention; and though he was still but a very humble proficient in writing and spelling, there were many of those who looked with scorn on the poor shoemaker's apprentice, who would have been unable to boast one half the information he possessed, nor have gone through one quarter of the authors he had carefully studied.

Thus matters had proceeded for nearly two years. Solitude and reading had combined with a naturally powerful mind, to nurture in his soul not only an elevated tone of thought

and principle, and an intense ambition to rise above his present station, but fancy and feeling had received their share in the general growth and expansion of the mind and heart; and while nature ripened into manhood, the solitary youth, in his sequestered musings by the margin of the sea—that mighty nurse of great emotions—began to feel the desire and necessity of some fond fair being on whom could be lavished all the overflowing tenderness of a young and trusting heart,—to whose ear might be confided the many sorrows he had to undergo,—from whose lips might be received the noblest and dearest stimulus towards that course of hope and glory for which he was daily and hourly pining. Thus prepared to receive with avidity and retain with tenacity any impression, he was one afternoon, before the commencement of our story, walking sorrowfully onward upon the Exeter road, and had paused to watch the setting sun from one of the high cliffs over which it winds.

Full of deep and solemn reveries upon his future life, he gazed intently from time to time

upon the noble expanse of water before him, over which was blowing the delightfully fresh breezes of summer, while as its waves sparkled in their joyous career, they occasionally gave back to the eye the rose-coloured tint of the western heavens;—when suddenly a carriage and four horses that had been galloping along the road, drew up behind our hero; and in the still pause which immediately followed the dashing of the horses' feet, a voice exclaimed, "O! how beautiful."

What had Charles James to do with carriages and four? they belonged to the titled and the rich,—to those whom he believed to be the happy of mankind;—a foolish and most usual error, into which our ill-regulated wishes often lead us, in defiance alike of all the testimony of experience and the authority of reason.

"Yes," muttered he, "they belong to the titled, the rich, and the happy: what have I to do with them or they with me? Alas! nothing." And this melancholy conviction induced him not to move, though he heard the wheels advancing long before they stopped,

and knew they were pulling up but a few yards behind him.

The moment, however, that voice reached his ear,—though in the whole course of his life he had never heard it before—though till that very time he had never been within many hundred miles of the being who breathed it,—the very instant those full sweet tones electrified his heart, something seemed to shoot into his bosom with the keenness of an arrow and the extacy of delight. It sounded like some dear familiar song loaded with the exquisite memory of better and happier days, and called up innumerable emotions beyond even his own power to define; while, with the most perfect conviction, he felt assured that the utterer must be a being of great personal beauty.

Though this is rarely the concomitant of a sweet voice, yet such was the impression those sounds had left on Charles's mind. In an instant he turned round, and then all further sense of where he was—how engaged—what doing—who beholding,—time—place, or circumstance, were lost! Fondly as he had

dreamed,—vivid as his imagination had lately grown, and fed with the most splendid descriptions which the best of our poets have left behind them, as proofs of their genius, little had Charles expected ever to behold on earth anything that could convey to him one half the feeling of mute, respectful, yet adoring transport with which he was at that instant inspired by the youthful being he then beheld. The carriage contained but two people,—one was Sir George Auberville, and the other was the sweet and lovely speaker. Sir George sat back with his hand placed on the waist of the fair stranger, to prevent her falling, as she stood up in the carriage and gazed on the beautiful prospect spread out before her; while, as to the lady herself, she seemed to be fixed with transport at the scene she beheld.

Charles, in the meanwhile, remained gazing in mute astonishment, and wondering who and what this faultless being could be—whence she came, and whither she was going. Hurriedly in his own mind did he con over some device, by which he might gratify his curiosity. No-

thing, however, occurred to him. He hoped that the gazers might ask some question which would enable him to come under that beautiful being's notice; but though Charles felt sure that she was a stranger to Dawlish, it was very evident, from the remarks made by the elder companion, that he was not.

At first, Charles's eye caught that of the beauty; and in her soft, liquid glance, there seemed to lurk some potent and inexplicable spell which caused a perceptible tremor in every limb, even though it no longer rested on him, but was directed towards the distant sea, the coast, and village. Although Charles felt, as he stood gazing thus, that he laid himself open to the charge of rudeness, still he was unable to withdraw his glance from the speaking countenance on which it had first rested with so much delight.

From the proximity in which the carriage stood, the utmost facility was afforded him for noting the slightest shade of variation in her expression; and even then, while he could not but be struck with it's rare youth, beauty, and

loveliness, a feeling of sorrow and surprise spread itself over Charles's heart, as he watched the melancholy tenderness that rose in the young beauty's eyes, and the look of haughty pride that was still traceable amid all the dimples round her mouth.

"What is she to me?" sighed Charles, endeavouring to withdraw his ardent looks of admiration, and turn his back on the point of attraction,—but it was in vain. Despite himself, his glance would wander back again as if a degree of fascination had been used by the object of it, alike endearing and irresistible; and thus he continued to admire and struggle, to strive yet sink the more, until the lady resumed her seat with a deep sigh, and the carriage flew precipitately on.

Without thinking whither he was going, or to what end his present act might lead him, he set off running after the barouche, which he continued to follow until it drove into the gates of Cliffville, and by the time he had arrived opposite to these, the porter was reshooting the heavy bolts that excluded him from

the gardens, which the bright stranger had in his fond and inflamed imagination rendered a second Eden.

Still amidst all his regret, as he stood lingering near, he could not help rejoicing that he had traced to what he trusted was her home, one whose appearance had so discomposed him. At any rate, he should now be able to find out, who and what this beautiful being was, and though doubtless, far, far beyond his reach, it would yet be no profanation to mingle her name in all his orisons, and adorn her beautiful image with those exquisite draperies with which the enamoured fancy can best wreathe the form young Love has deified.

CHAPTER VI.

In a small village like Dawlish, it did not require much ingenuity to discover that the fresh arrival was that of Sir George Auberville's niece, the Lady Siberia Sweetbriar; when Charles heard this title in answer to what he thought some most cautious enquiries at the house of the family washerwoman, who was his near neighbour, the garrulous Blanchisseuse thought she observed an air of unusual dejection steal over the expressive features of our hero, when she named the high rank of the peerless damsel, and unaccustomed to the well taught necessity of concealing every emotion, and altogether labouring under a mistake, she politely observed.—

"Why! you fool! what are you looking so

blank about? do you think the young lady is likely to walk about without shoes?"

"No," replied Charles, blushing, "it wasn't that, I was considering."

"Then what was it? some precious idea I'll warrant me,—come let's have it, what was it?"

"Oh! why! nothing particular."

"Come! what was it?"

"Why! if the truth must be told; don't you think its rather unlikely that a lady of her rank, will come to such humble workmen as ourselves?"

"Not at all, you gaby, of course her ladyship will allow me to have some influence in these matters, and I'll patronize you, Charley, my boy, if you behave yourself."

Charles very readily promised this part of the matter, and set off as deeply melancholy as any unfortunate youth might desire, or haughty mistress ask to see. Alas! it needs not to descend to such humble life, nor to the frightful obstacles which shut out our hero from the sphere of the Lady Siberia, to imagine the

misery in which Charles passed the next three or four days.

Who has not experienced the wretchedness of suddenly meeting some beautiful creature, whom, at a single glance, we feel that to know would be to adore, whose soul beaming from her face, assures us that in her disposition is concentred all those amiable qualities which our own wishes, tendencies, and desires, have pictured through life, as the greatest essentials to our enjoyment, one, in short, whose appearance we are on the instant ready to take as a voucher, that nothing else is necessary to our perfect happiness?

Who has not seen such a divinity sweep beyond him, in the crush-room of the opera, flit past him in her carriage, in Pall Mall, or disappear in the gloomy temple of some Bank in Fleet Street or the Strand, and all the while some antique spinster of an aunt,—some distant relation, with all sorts of expectations, and still more jealousy, chains him fast by hanging on his arm, or some life and death business, some duel for a friend, appointment for a consulta-

tion, some death-bed summons, hurrying him off in the opposite direction, beyond all probability of escape—denies even the faintest probability of finding his sudden victor's name! Who has not endured all this, and feeling himself but a moment before the happiest among the happy, the most careless among the free, has, nevertheless, from that instant found descend upon his soul, a heavy aching burthen, which it has taken days to shake off; to which the sparkling of the wine cup has only given increased activity, while the pillow instead of supporting a head refreshed with sleep, has heard the inarticulate murmurings of some such proposed advertisement, as the following—"If a beautiful girl who was seen riding yesterday in a dark green Britchska, with a military decoration on the panel, and nearly ran over a gentleman on the crossing between Albemarle Street and St. James's, will, &c. &c. &c." who, we say, has not endured all this? that has lived a single season in London, Florence, or Vienna?

Such then, only a thousand-fold more deep

and bitter, were the feelings of our hero. The hopeless reflection on his abased and degraded situation in life, contrasted with the elevated rank of his divinity, made him strive fearfully, as every sensible person would, to forget that he had ever seen her, but alas! the very circumstances of his position, only made this task more hopeless.

No giddy whirl of life, no multitude of a thousand and one occupations; no host of friends surrounding, no choice of amusements, not even the anti-sentimental influence of a great city was at hand, to help him in the heart-breaking and unequal fight. A long course of thought, and solitude, and reading, and still more than all, a long indulgence in the unrestricted pleasures of imagination, had led him to the very point at which he would most easily fall a prey to the fate that struck him down.

How often on those solitary shores, had he spent night after night, under the bright rays of the delicate moon, imagining, wishing, praying for the advent of some bright young

creature, fitted and formed for all that youth so ardently desires to experience, and now she came, as if expressly fashioned by the munificence of nature for his delight, and here suddenly, in the very moment of his rapture, he found the wilderness of the burning desert itself, would have proved a less impassable barrier, than those which the nsages of society, and the hand of destiny, had placed between them.

It was as if everything his soul had aspired to long after, had appeared to him in a dream, and the garish light of morning had suddenly proved the unsubstantial nature of the vision, but unfortunately, this was to be a vision lasting through life, with the sorrowful light of truth, for ever breaking to embitter it. In his vain efforts to get free, there was nothing to assist him. His sedentary occupation defied him to resist thought, or to drive from his brain the image that had usurped it. No companion came to cheer his melancholy, or divert perforce the current it had taken; while his lines were cast in a beautiful but sequestered village,

where every step he took presented the loveliness of nature, and inculcated the superiority of the quiet delights of affection, over those of turmoil and ambition.

Alas! unfortunate being: every thing conspired against him, and like the kingly Lord of the Jungle, who bears the barbed arrow in his side, it was not in the depth of the wild that the fevered wound forgot to throb, while the more impatiently he lashed his side, the more burning became the sting that maddened him.

Thus passed the few first days after his unfortunate meeting with the Lady Siberia on the cliff, during which time, whenever he ventured among the dwellings of his neighbours, his ear was saluted with continual reports of that magic beauty, which he alas! had proved too well, and which seemed to have taken all hearts by storm. With a lover's inconsistency, he felt a strange delight in listening to these accounts, even while they aggravated the madness under which he suffered.

"When all eyes can equally acknowledge her supremacy," said Charles, "it is not

difficult to foresee the result. Some favoured, and perhaps heartless son of fortune, will behold her, and bear her away as his prize, the real worth of which, he may never be able to estimate; and I perhaps shall live to see this done. Well, were my happiness only at stake, perhaps it were better it should be so, but—" his lip sadly quivered, and a tear fell from his cheek upon the salt shore, as he breathed these bitter thoughts aloud.

The night was fair as any that our climate could produce, and as Charles looked up at the heavens where the moon was still in its first quarter, and every star contributing its individual glory to the majesty of night, one brighter than the rest attracted his attention, and seemed to suggest a line of conduct in his own hard case.

"Can I not worship her as one of those? bright as she is, they are! Pure is she as they seem, and oh! as distant from him whose heart is filled with her influence! May she not be may own bright particular star? The focus of my thoughts and prayers? An incentive to

my better deeds, though nothing more? What shall it be to me how many thousand worshippers she has in other climes, they may be nearer than myself, more distant alas! they cannot be, but while heaven permits her to shine, her light shall glad these eyes; and when they are glazed in death, or she is shrouded from their vision, she may still be the delight and worship of others! Mean, wretched mechanic that I am; this is indeed a madness, but as I am not able to resist, I must endure it."

Turning his steps towards Cliffville, Charles, quite secure that he had resigned all thoughts of Lady Siberia, save as some unattainable deity, gave himself up to the delight of stealing round the walls that contained her, watching the gradual extinction of every light in the house one after another, and fixing in his own mind that which was likely to beam from her own apartment, and then breathing endless prayers for her repose—he crept home, broken-hearted and despairing, to his own pallet.

As he arrived at his door and compared the wretched hovel before him with that he

had been recently watching, he could not help exclaiming in the husky and frantic tones of rage and grief.

"And nature that has planted in my bosom emotions capable of loving her, has made me what? but one degree above the beasts that crawl—what am I? dare I? can I? pronounce the word, that designates my degradation among my fellow men?—No!—Eternal Spirit of Truth what is it that perpetually haunts me? What is it that perpetually whispers in my ear I was not born to such most odious humiliation? a state of filth and wretchedness combined. Yet I will not be without some grain of self-respect even in that hideous state —within those wretched walls are seven human beings who, but for the tireless labour of this humble arm, must have met starvation before now. In the bright eye of God, the haughtiest duke can boast no prouder honour. Why should humanity alas! approve itself so weak, as to sigh rather for the gewgaws of the multitude, than that nobility which is only of the soul, and whose patency bears on its brow

the sign manual of God? Yet if these aspirings are unholy, why should he have created that—oh! most exquisite reflex of his own divinity, fair woman? and given to that sweet representative of his image power to heal our hearts as his breath plays with the tempest—no! to soar for virtuous love can be no crime—and so by every hope of Heaven, I'll rise beyond the lowly office my ill star has thrust upon me, or lose my life a thousand times in the effort."

CHAPTER VII.

When Charles awoke on the following morning and rushed to his bath in the sea, almost before the sun had left it, he remembered with a sigh his lofty resolutions of the previous night, and for a moment weighed them as the effusions of a temporary madness. By degrees, however, as the cold water braced up his nerves and sent the blood more cheerily through his heart, the same tone of sentiment recurred, and looking towards Cliffville, almost as brilliant in the rays of the morning sun as the lustrous eyes of its dear mistress, he repeated the vow, that vaulting ambition had induced him to offer on the preceding night, and began to consider in his own mind how his purpose could be carried into effect—now however all

the real difficulties of his situation arose in judgment on his rashness.

After considering, first one alternative and then another, and being able to fix on no one feasible plan in particular, the striking of the hour of five, warned him to depart to the drudgery of his labour; and taking a longer round in order to pass the hallowed grounds, and lover-like press his lips on the senseless wall that formed his Temple, he felt like Cinderella at the hour of midnight, reduced from the grandeurs of fairy land to the drudgeries of a cinder wench, and mourned over what he esteemed the impossibility of his glass slipper, being ever admired or cried. Still he had taken the first foundation step to greatness, he had prepared his own soul for the perilous pilgrimage,—was armed to meet death in the effort, and resolved that nothing less should stay him.

How few worldly honours are there for which we sigh, which may not be achieved by forming and adhering to resolves like these? But then, bear it in mind, ye countless sons of

ambition !—It is only to a few master spirits of the age that Heaven permits the privilege of being able to keep up to the stern and trying determination that all may form and few fulfil —fulfil! and to what end? Ask sober reason, and sad experience replies, to find too often the gorgeous globe so madly chased—a frothy bubble—the empurpled glory of the meadows —a tricked out moth, despoiled even in the handling — the Lord of the Silver Veil, a hideous skeleton,—the long sought land of promise an unsubstantial bank of vapour, over which, when our vessel needs all the refuge and safety of a harbour, we are tossed on an endless sea of fear.

On the whole, therefore, daily examples prove to us that nicer judgment is required in deciding where ambition shall have its limits, than where its dominions shall commence. All these thoughts passed through the mind of Charles as he sat at work at his lapstone, and fully convinced, like the rest of us, that he had exactly hit the right medium; the rest of the week was devoted to considering into what new

channel he should push his little barque and crowd all sail.

Thoroughly imbued with what my kind and most esteemed friend, Mr. Basil Montagu, would call "the love of learning," his thoughts naturally turned towards literature; while a blush overspread his countenance as he thought that with all his labour he had not yet been able to achieve that art which, simple as it is, many well educated persons are never able to attain—namely, of spelling correctly. Still, though this resource and many others passed through his mind, he could fix on nothing positively, save the perpetual purpose of trying to obtain another glimpse of the Lady Siberia.

Once or twice Sir George Auberville's carriage had driven past Noisy Ned's shop down Breakneck Hill, duly described as aforesaid, some chapters back; but the glances thus obtained were of a kind most unsatisfactory to the visionary voracity of a lover's eyes. Sometimes he got only the wave of a feather; at others the turn of a curl; once, he was sufficiently fortunate to catch a glance of her bright eyes, on

which he lived for a week; besides enjoying two or three times, though this we impart confidentially, the happiness of perceiving the tip of her nose; and certainly he might roam through Greece any day without finding a better: but if it was only the outside of Lady Siberia's parasol, so deeply was the unfortunate Charles wounded, he would have been quite ready to worship it, and have thought himself too happy in the opportunity.

Still his detested occupation kept him so completely in doors—(thanks to his friend Abel Morris, who seemed to possess all the old shoes in the parish, merely for the delight of having them mended gratis,) Charles could never get out until the day was far gone, and the fashionable world engaged at their in-door occupations; and all chance of seeing Lady Siberia at an end for any mortal kind of vision, not endowed with the power of seeing through stone walls, close carriage bodies, &c.

For a long while our hero hoped to have enjoyed full and delicious opportunity of beholding her at church on Sunday; so he diligently

attended week after week, and endured no ordinary trial of the very long walk to—and still longer sermon of Dr. Parkins—at the parish church ; but the lovely Lady Siberia was never to be seen. In this dilemma, he had recourse to the never-failing oracle, the family washerwoman ; but happening to chance upon that lady on the first evening of her great wash, he narrowly escaped the horrors of a tray of indigo and soft soap, with the reversion of the mangle.

Cursing in his heart those blue vapours which seemed to arise in such profusion, whatever turn his path might take, Charles determined to trust to no one but himself; and the following Sunday, being a fine day, he stood on watch near the gates of Cliffville from eight o'clock, to see whether the family came out to church at all, and if so, where they went. There were in Dawlish, a Synagogue and one or two Methodist chapels, besides a new set of Ranters kept by a zealous apothecary, as a novel mode of getting into an extraordinary practice.—Charles's whole soul was in arms at the idea of

his beloved one smiling on anything less than a part of the Established Church, and he was right in his conjecture;—for soon after nine, the gates of Cliffville were thrown wide open, and forth rolled Sir George's barouche, with the veteran sitting in one corner of it, and the adored Lady Siberia in the other.

As soon as ever the porter had barred those gates which no longer possessed a charm for our hero, away the latter started in the most cautious, but still most determined style, as a species of running footman—only that he followed the vehicle, instead of going before it.

When the carriage reached Veale's Hotel, Charles's wonder in not seeing Lady Siberia at church was at an end;—the horses were turned off in an entirely opposite direction, and the route directed towards Teignmouth.—As this was between three and four miles distant, Charles found that he had a very pleasant sort of chace before him; but knowing there is little delight where there is little trouble, he cheerfully resigned himself to his guiding star, and ran the whole route, unperceived by any of

the inhabitants of the carriage, until he had fairly ensconced himself within the church in question. The day was a bright one in June, and therefore it may easily be supposed that the excursion was not of the coolest nor most agreeable kind to the pedestrian.—We may therefore imagine his intense disappointment, when, on gaining the interior of the edifice, poor Charles found the Lady Siberia had gone to the aristocratic pew of her father's old brother officer, the Earl of Tauthaud, where nothing more than a little of her drapery could be seen, to cheer those devotional exercises which he came to render.

This, it may perhaps be fairly urged, was a just visitation upon him for seeking such a spot for such a purpose: but without wishing to defend his misdemeanour, we will only in his defence assert the severity of the punishment, since he not only lost the object which he had travelled so painfully to attain, but had to return home unaccompanied by the carriage of Sir George Auberville, who dined with his old shipmate; while poor Charles had to

dine with Duke Humphrey, or in other words, to go without his dinner altogether,—he being too late for that rather indispensable meal at his master's house, and not daring to say how he had missed it elsewhere. Giving himself up to the delights of a long and reflective ramble, he took care not to return till late at night, when his excellent position with his mistress made up for all sufferings, except those of the mind, which to every appearance remained as bitter and as hopeless as ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEARLY every thing in life, save suffering, was new to Charles, who had fondly imagined he might give himself up to all the intoxicating delights of consuming love, and yet stand in the midst of the fiery furnace unsinged.

He was quickly doomed, however, like all others who have gone before him, to prove the fallacy of his anticipation. Day by day he had long felt himself growing gradually more weak and ill, until at length the exertion, which we recorded in our last chapter, of combined fatigue and abstinence, brought his malady to such a crisis that not even his willing spirit could any longer combat against bodily infirmities.

He appeared at his work as usual, it is true; but the day had at length arrived when his

utmost exertions were required to sit at the bench without falling.

The hour was rapidly approaching noon, a few mornings after our hero's expedition to Teignmouth, when, utterly overcome with the illness that had so rapidly gained on him, he fairly gave up, in despair, the hateful occupation he was pursuing for the daily bread of himself and those around him, and leaned back on his seat in overwhelming misery and wretchedness.

Surrounded by all the implements of his trade, he was seated on a low chair. Mean as was the occupation and disfiguring the dress he wore, there was something in his high pale forehead, aquiline nose, and well formed lips and chin, that arrested the attention of the acute observer; even if the whole of these had not been enlivened by the fire of a full quick eye, that, apparently fixed upon the dirty window opposite to which he sat, was in reality, gazing on vacancy, and returning no distinct image to the mind.

Slowly a large tear gathered on the lid, and

gradually trickling down the cheek, fell on the work upon which he was engaged : another and another followed, each increasing in volume and rapidity until they formed a perfect shower, and the weeper became too much involved in his own sorrowful thoughts to notice what was going on around him.

Unobserved, as he evidently believed himself to be,—a watchful eye had, however, been fixed upon his countenance, not from any idle curiosity, but from feelings of strong gratitude and affection ;—one who had gradually seen the overclouding of his soul, marked the ravages that it silently inflicted on his frame, and marvelled with no less of sorrow than surprise at the melancholy change she had observed.

The place in which Noisy Ned professed to carry on the business of shoemaking, was a little low room, eight feet long by four and a half wide ; one end of which opened upon the aforesaid Hill, that led up at no very remote distance to Cliffville, while the other end communicated by a door with a still smaller closet which served for the parlour.

In the middle of this door was a small window with what had once been a white curtain hung before it. Through this window, silently watching Charles, Mrs. Tyler had been attracted to gaze, by the sudden cessation of the youth's hammer; and after waiting several minutes and observing the outpouring of quiet grief to which we have alluded, she gently raised the latch between them, and silently took her place on the bench beside her husband's apprentice.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH sitting so close to his side, that she could hear the agitating palpitations of his heart, Charles was too much engrossed by his own sorrows, to be conscious that any one was watching him. At length, laying her arm lightly on his shoulder, Mrs. Tyler with all the kind soothing tones of which a woman's voice is capable, said, "Charles, what is it so distresses you?"

"Nothing, I assure you," replied the lad in answer to her kind and pressing enquiries, his voice sinking into a whisper, and the tears rapidly coursing each other down his hollow cheeks.

"Ah! Charles," said his companion, pressing his wasted hands in hers, "you mustn't tell a woman that; God has given us sharp eyes,

where our own sex is concerned, and I am much mistaken if he hasn't set your heart where your eyes mayn't follow."

"No! mother, you're wrong," painfully gasped the lad, contradicting this charge, while the brilliant crimson on his cheek gave full and quick denial to the assertion on his lip.

"Am I wrong?" said the mistress, watching with intense acuteness, the symptoms we have remarked, and then adding with a sigh, "well, I thought I had known what love is too truly to be far wrong when I saw it; but if that's not the matter, do for Heaven's sake let me speak to a doctor for you." Charles shook his head. "Do, my dear boy," pursued the kind hearted creature at his side. "It almost breaks my heart to see you wasting away day by day, till one can nearly see through your hand as you sit at work."

"I shall be better soon."

"Alas! Charles, so many poor souls have said, and put off and put off troubling themselves, till nothing could be done for them. If you don't think of yourself—and I know you're

too generous to do that much; indeed, half so much as you ought,—do, for the love of heaven, think of me and my children, and take care of yourself for our sake. What is to become of us if you fall sick? For all that I can say, my husband will mind nothing but his beer and his drinking companions. How often should we have starved had it not been for you. Do, for God's sake, my dear boy, do something to take care of yourself. Who can look at your poor wasted chest, and hear you lying awake, sobbing and coughing in the dead of night, when you think us fast asleep, and yet believe you when you say there's nothing the matter. I haven't liked to speak to you before, Charles, because I know that none of us wish that others should watch our sorrows, and heaven above sends each their own in this sad world; but my heart is fit to break when I think, if anything should happen to you, what's to become of these poor little ones,"—catching up from her knee her youngest child, and pressing it with frantic fondness to her bosom; then adding—"Poor little growing dears! day by day they

want bread the more, while their father seems less and less inclined to work for it. What with starvation and ill-usage, I was all but gone to the other world when you came to live with us, and if I'm taken away, what will these little orphans——" the mother could pursue the sad hypothesis no further; but hiding her face in the lap of her child, wept most bitterly.

"I never knew what it was to have a mother," said Charles, kindly taking her hand in his; "you have supplied the place as far as woman could, and I feel for you and them: do not ask me what has been the matter—I could not even name it to myself. I have been very ungrateful to forget there was some one in the world to whom my life was a matter of some little care; but I'll remember it for the future. Perhaps I am to blame in giving way to what I felt; I have struggled harder than ——." Charles could say no more; even in the very utterance of his promise not to feel, the bitter remembrance of his grief surprised him; and after several ineffectual efforts to finish his

sentence, he was obliged to rush to the humble pallet upon which he slept, and in the unrestrained abandonment of the agony that oppressed him, seek that relief which even sorrow allows its victims, to prolong their woe.

CHAPTER X.

After half an hour thus spent, Charles quietly stole out of the house and bent his way towards the beach. In so doing, he had to pass the door of Sir George Auberville, and thinking himself unobserved, remained quietly gazing at the grounds for some minutes, drew three or four heavy sighs, and then walked on. His course now lay down a rude flight of steps cut by the preventive men, and having gained the beach, he pursued the beaten path; one of the chief recommendations of which, to his mind, was its solitary character. On his right hand lay the sea, then coming in at half tide, and on his left reared the high wall of Cliff, down which he had just descended. From its red and mineral loaded bosom, a few yards further on, gushed forth a stream of the most transparent crystal,

and opposite to it stood a singular and isolated rock, on the top of which a seat had been placed to command the prospect: going up to the spring, Charles knelt and bathed his burning temples in its cool refreshing waters as they fell upon the ground and formed a natural basin in the stone,—whence, running into the sea along their cressied channel, the sweetness of their silver stream was lost in the salt wilderness.

"It is an emblem of our youth," said Charles, thinking aloud, as he seated himself by the side of the fountain, and leaned his head upon his hand. "Alas! alas! all that is most bright in our rugged and flinty nature, is doomed to run itself to waste.—In the first brief career of purity and innocence, it forms itself a channel amid everything that is fresh and beautiful; for fancy's magic wand calls up around it the sweetest verdure, while the stream runs undefiled; but entering on the arid wilderness of life, its fertilizing strength becomes exhausted on the barren ingratitude of mankind, its power is wasted among uncounted objects, and time,

like an absorbing sea, rolls its encroaching world of bitter waters over our path, and we are seen no more; and while some run the full distance to low water, others are absorbed when they have scarcely reached the turn of tide. And this lot will be mine!" concluded he, with a deep sigh.

A sudden reflection gleamed in the waters of the spring,—something like a footstep fell on the ear of the muser. With the nervous quickness of one detected in some unchecked outpouring of the soul, Charles looked round.—Who shall paint the conflict of confusion, terror, wonderment, transport, delight and shame that filled his bosom, when he beheld the Lady Siberia standing at his side.

She wore a light morning dress, without the slightest ornament, and was accompanied by a noble greyhound of the largest species—an old staid creature whose every look and motion seemed to testify his full consciousness of the high and honourable charge reposed in him. Dogs are an aristocratical set of rascals, and with that hatred of all poor people which rich

dogs possess, Tobolski no sooner beheld the ragged clothes of Charles, than the first note of a low muttered thunder filled his capacious chest. In an instant the white and gleaming hand of his mistress was laid on the creature's forehead, and after toying with the treasure for a few seconds, the noble animal bent its head and drank from the spring pool in a manner that perfectly signified his amity with the poor apprentice.

Charles, in the meanwhile, no sooner beheld standing near him the lovely vision that had so long haunted every thought, made a paradise of his hard and humble pillow, and shone like some redeeming angel at every turn of his painful and laborious life, than involuntarily springing to his feet, and snatching his cap from his head, he stood trembling and supporting himself against the rock with downcast eyes that would—Oh! with what rapture—and yet dared not, look upon the face he had been, as he thought, insane enough to love. Still, it did occur to him that he might, without giving any offence or making too bold with his divinity,

give a slight glance at the little feet and exquisitely turned ancle that peeped from the flounces of her morning robe.

Here, then, with feelings of the most intense transport, his glances fixed. Ah! what indeed, amid all the humble treasures of that lowly youth, would he have hesitated to sacrifice for permission to throw himself upon the ground, and kiss even the hem of her garment! As he remained thus standing, his hands clasped before him, holding his cap, and his eyes cast down, his figure assumed one of those easy, graceful attitudes, which unschooled youth and nature so often present, to shame the studied efforts of forced art.

Though humble and soiled his dress, still it was one not without some claim to be considered picturesque—the frightful apron of the trade he followed having been left at home; and nothing but a moray-coloured jacket and trowsers, closely fitting to his shape, constituted his apparel; while a collar and a coarse but spotless shirt loosely tied with a black riband, showed a very fair and well turned neck and chin.

The meeting appeared equally unexpected on the part of Lady Siberia, who had evidently just come from Sir George's house; she had never seen the figure of the youth, until the sudden angle of the rock had brought her opposite to the spot upon which he stood. The sudden and deep respect which he had shewn attracted her attention, or she had otherwise passed by without knowing who he was. The moment, however, that her bright glance fell on his pale and woe-worn features, some thought, emotion, or remembrance seemed to rivet it there.

There was something so singular in the hushed aspect of the youth, that it might well have attracted her attention; and seeing his eyes fixed so humbly on the ground, this may, in all probability, have emboldened her to regard him with more marked scrutiny than she would otherwise have liked to use. The evident suffering and illness visible in his person, might also have called forth some emotion of pity, for this certainly was the expression which her own beautiful countenance bore, as

her eyes rested, first on the delicate and well formed hands, and then on the clear throat; at the base of which she could perceive the heart throbbing with frightful violence; though little suspecting that she herself was the cause of such excitement. In a few seconds, however, she observed the before pallid features grow crimson as the flower of the cactus; and then fade quickly back into its original pallor—crimson again and fade once more.

Surely it is not to the heavens alone, nor to inanimate objects, nor even to our corporeal frame, that electricity is confined; all who have watched the play of human passion narrowly, must know that in the immaterial impulses and wishes of the heart, some portion of that subtle influence may be mingled—how else do we acquire the unreasoning, the intuitive, the instant knowledge that we are loved? Why from the moment that the Lady Siberia beheld the humble lad who worshipped her, should some inexpressible feeling of oppression have gathered in her bosom, until her own

pulses became as irregular, her cheeks coloured almost as deeply as did his own.

Yet had the thought come palpably and distinctly before her, that one so far from her own position, one separated from her own estate by such an impassable gulf, had dared even for an instant to think of her with feelings of adoration,—how irrepressible would have been her wrath and scorn. Yet had she examined her own heart minutely, she would have found, although she could not have explained why, a perfect knowledge that those downcast eyes, that tumultuous bosom and those burning cheeks, were all for her.

Happy it was for him, however, that this knowledge remained latent; so perfect was his adoration, so dejected, so unhoping, and yet alas so irresistible, that scorn from her, though it had been confined to the merest glance alone, might have altered the whole current of his destiny. As it was, she thought not of the real depth of any feelings he might entertain, her unfeigned compassion for one who was

evidently both ailing and unhappy, induced her to let fall a few kind sentences which were treasured up like gems from Heaven. While as she spoke the last few words, Charles who had at length found courage to lift his glance to hers, imagined that never in the whole course of his existence, had he seen anything that realized one half so much the visions he had formed of Heaven's inhabitants.

Love is ever apt to imagine its idol possessed of more than mortal charms, but certainly, in this case, Charles had a fair excuse for such an estimation of his divinity. Amid the world at large she bore the title of being as haughty a beauty as ever yet received the homage of mankind: and certainly it must be confessed she was not a little queenly in her notions, and frequently still more regal in her mode of shewing them, especially to those against whom she conceived the slightest prejudice.

The knowledge of this fact, added to every other part of the case, had increased the tremor with which Charles had regarded her; an emotion far from unobserved by the Lady,

and which had in great degree influenced her conduct towards him; while on his part, taken by surprise at her kind and gentle tones, and thoughtful enquiries after the welfare of the family in which he lived, and still more by her knowing who and what he was, astonishment and delight rendered him for many moments motionless. Unable to dispense with the support of the rock against which he leaned, his eyes followed her retreating form, without his possessing or wishing to possess the slightest power of withdrawing them.

With a heart, unhappily, too grateful for his own peace, he saw the inestimable object of his passion, wander slowly away down to the sea, and then continue her walk by its rising margin, towards the Langstone Rock. At length a jutting turn of the cliff shut her figure out from further view, and clasping his hands, as he still stood, he breathed a fervent prayer for her happiness; then observing opposite to himself the clear and distinct marks of her little footsteps, he threw himself passionately on the ground, and rapturously kissed the spot on which she had stood.

By some chance, accident, or turn of thought, she also had paused in her walk, and looking back, beheld this act of wild adoration, for though where he had been standing, she had been hidden from his sight, the footprints which Charles was thus worshipping being two yards distant from his own position, were thoroughly visible.—Of this, however, he was not aware, while the lady being at such a great distance, was unable to divine the object of his strange prostration, and only hit on its true nature, when other and subsequent facts afforded her its right interpretation.

Little thinking that he was so watched, Charles remained lying on the ground, and taking from his pocket a paper, and carefully gathering up every particle of the sand on which his idol had rested, folded the whole, with many tears, and bestowed it in his bosom.

Having lingered on the beach, as he imagined, unnoticed until the Lady Siberia had quitted it, Charles returned to his wretched home, for the time, a far happier being. But

whether, however, the temporary joy thus attained, was but to lead to a speedy increase of misery was a matter for the future, at which, lover-like, he glanced casually; and the consideration of which he most willingly deferred.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE our hero had thus, however, been delighting himself in a manner most of all after his own heart, an unexpected evil had been gathering over his destiny in a quarter whence he least thought to be assailed, and where, moreover, the most devoted feelings of attachment were entertained for him, and the utmost kindness intended.

Quite convinced, from the conversation which we have attempted to sketch, that Charles really was in a state of health which, if not immediately dangerous, might speedily become so, Mrs. Tyler no sooner heard him depart from her humble door, than, consigning her children to the care of a neighbour, she donned her best bonnet, and under the full influence

of that zeal with which misdirected kindness is sure to be cursed withal, hastened to lay her views of the case before the Galenic oracle of the place, and solicit the assistance of the well-known Dr. Gossip.

The good humoured Dr. heard and humoured his consultor, and having learned that Charles would be at home in the course of the afternoon, promised to call and see him. Call accordingly the Doctor did, and had barely secured a chair on which it was just possible there might *not* be enough cobbler's pitch to fix him, when in walked our hero. In an instant, Gossip pinned his patient by the button-hole; escape was impracticable: and though he took our hero by surprise, this very circumstance enabled him more plainly to perceive that the mind was the primary offender—not the body.

Dr. Gossip was a merry, good-hearted sort of person, and fond of a joke when it was to be had; not particularly scrupulous against whom it might be raised, though he preferred it to be at his neighbour's expence rather than his own; a plan, I confess, I somewhat admire myself.

Having endeavoured to rally Charles into a confession of that which was the cause of so much disturbance, without meeting much success in the attempt, he shook his head in that knowing manner which is or should be the first scientific accomplishment of the learned tribe of Esculapius, and took his departure, assuring the lady most interested that something tending very speedily to the relief of the patient should rapidly arrive.

Unfortunately, however, this rapidity was doomed to be realised in a very different manner from that intended. Dr. Gossip had just gracefully bent his head to depart from under the door-way, when up came Charles's worthy master, drawn from the pot-house on an especial mission, by the news that the Doctor was in his dwelling. We know that when a house is said to be on flames, the proprietor will even quit the pit of a theatre to visit his own fire-side. Floods and other calamities seem to possess a like effect: bailiffs, by the way, produce a contrary action. But Dr. Gossip was rather surprised at the expression of anger on the coun-

tenance of the anti-Jacobin cobbler, which met him at the threshold, and seemed very impenetrably to demand, "what have I done that I should be troubled with the doctor?"

So eloquent indeed was the expression of Crispin's face, that the Doctor at once answered —"It is only your apprentice indisposed;" and Gossip put out his hand in a condescending manner, and led the cobbler a few steps down the street by the arm.

With a woman's quick intuition, the wife saw how imminent was the danger of such a conference, and sprang forward to avert it; but she was too late,—by the time she had gained the door, the doctor and the cobbler were quietly settled in a most communicative corner some yards down the street. Here Gossip, little suspecting that he was doing any harm, and least of all that he was trespassing in an affair *de cœur*, for which—unless the world belied him greatly—he was asserted and known to have a profound respect, enquired of the cobbler whether he knew of any thing that was preying on the mind of his apprentice.

At first the worthy Jacobin was taken by surprise—in a few minutes afterwards he recollected, having heard sundry jokes thrown out, and coupling these with certain suspicions which had arisen in his own mind, occasioned by having seen our hero rambling divers times round Sir George's house, and having moreover caught him more than once attempting to inscribe Lady Siberia's name at various times and places, &c. he at once put it to the learned Doctor whether the disease might not be Love.

"Straight as a pike staff," returned Dr. Gossip, smiling at the idea as it presented itself, "that will account for every thing. I wonder it never occurred to me, though I had some indistinct notion on the subject. I was not aware that you gentlemen of the awl were so sensitive of the tender passion."

"D—e, I'll make him sensitive before long."

"Tut, man, don't be angry; it's very natural at his time of life: the best thing you can do is to let him marry the girl."

"But I say, doctor, he can't marry the girl; —girl indeed!"

"Can't marry her!—why, what the devil is to prevent it?" enquired Gossip, who had now got on a subject that engaged all his sympathy. "A tall, likely fellow, like that, who will make a strapping man, if you'll only give him time. What's to prevent his marrying the girl?"

"I tell you, doctor, it isn't a girl."

"I hope it isn't an old woman!—heaven defend me!"

"Why, doctor, heaven's rather otherwise engaged just at present; but I think you may be perfectly safe—it isn't an old woman."

"Middle-aged then, perhaps?"

"No it isn't middle-aged either."

"Why he can't be in love with a man."

"Not very likely."

"Then what aged woman is she?"

"It isn't a woman at all, doctor."

"Not a woman!—mercy on us!—how horrible! what is the animal?"

"No animal, either?—its *a lady*."

"Lord deliver us!—if that's all. I see no

reason on earth why he shouldn't marry her, if the lady, as you call her, is agreeable."

"Doctor, thee may be a very good physician, as they term it, but if thee don't manage thy apprentices better than you want me to manage mine, your patients must get rum physic sometimes, I am thinking."

"Ha, Ha! — Well, well! — if they can't marry, it's a very delicate affair to say what they ought to do! In the meantime I'll send the boy a mixture and some pills,—good morning."

Nodding familiarly to the shoemaker, away went the doctor.

"The mixture and pills," repeated the Anti-Jacobin sarcastically enough, as he saw the other disappear; "the devil have the consciences of such chaps! that is always their remedy; if the world was coming to an end, a mixture and a box of pills they think would set it up again! a rush for such doctors. I'll soon cure the villain's love for him," and muttering this, his kind intention, as he strolled along, he redirected his already drunken steps to his shop.

CHAPTER XII.

Fortunately or unfortunately, it is difficult to say which, Ned's wife had gone out to get some little luxuries for the invalid, from a lady in the neighbourhood, whose charitable disposition rejoiced in thus soothing the sicknesses of her poorer neighbours.

Our hero was sitting on his accustomed bench, leaning with his back against the wall, his face so pale and thin, as scarcely to look like life, while on his cheek rested one large bright tear. The quick heaving of his bosom below was the only signal that conveyed the idea of life to the beholder. To any one possessing one grain of good feeling, to any one capable of entertaining the slightest sympathy with the most universal, as well as most refined sorrow of our nature, the aspect of the poor lad

thus suffering and reduced from the strength of an impulse so much more powerful than the mind which engenders it as to wreck and devastate the corporeal frame allied to it, would have pleaded very urgently as w ell as eloquently for pity and support.

Not a particle of these feelings, however, seemed to cross the mind of the anti-jacobin. As if actuated only by a spirit of revenge, the attitude and appearance of Charles seemed but to inspire his master with fresh rage. Looking round the shop for some weapon of offence, the master seized the knee strap which hung over his own seat, covered with dust, from the length of time since he had used it.—

Flourishing this aloft in one hand he suddenly darted upon the unfortunate Charles with the other, and before the latter could be aware of his intention, began to inflict on him a most unrelenting shower of heavy blows—crying out as he did so,

"I'll teach you, you young vagabond, to neglect your work in this way, and let your wishes

wander where they've no business. I'll teach you, what it is to fill your head with a pack of whims and whamsies about ladies and that sort of cattle, I'll let you know what it is to be falling in love,—and at every word down fell the stiff heavy thong upon the weak and emaciated frame of the ill treated youth.

Taken by surprise as he was Charles had no fair chance of testing the mutual strength of himself and master, which at the best must have gone greatly against him—his spirit, however, was far too lofty to bear such an attack without resistance—even though death should be the penalty of his retaliation.

Starting from his reverie, he no sooner found who was thus cruelly attacking him, and gathered from the expressions used, that his secret, the cherished unseen hope, the inviolable confidence of his bosom was discovered, than all the blood in his body seemed suddenly thrown into the circulation of his features, and then while he grew as rapidly pale once more, there became evident in his large bright eyes a stern determination to make one last and

violent struggle for his independence. Uttering no cry either of pain or rage, he drew back his right arm, and feeble as his strength might be, delivered the entire force of his blow right in the face of his savage master.

The fury of the latter now seemed to know no bounds, pinning the unfortunate lad against the wall with one hand by the throat, so that he could scarcely move, or hardly breathe, with the other the enraged drunkard poured an incessant shower of blows upon the head and face of the unfortunate lad, whose labours had long given bread to the children of his assailant.

Covering his features with his left arm to escape marking, if possible, Charles now concentrated all his energies for a desperate struggle to get free, while the blows of his master continued, and were accompanied every second by the most incessant shouts and oaths, yelled out at the top of his voice, not so much with a view that any one should hear him, but simply from an involuntary expression of the brutal passion that filled his breast. For several

seconds, all Charles's efforts were vain, for what little strength he did possess was so cruelly weakened by the process of strangulation, which he was undergoing, that he felt the horrors of suffocation, without the blessing of its release.—

At last contriving to elevate one of his feet against the breast of his master, the latter was sent by a sudden exertion of his apprentice, stumbling backwards into the middle of the little shop, while Charles, exasperated by this unequal combat darted instantly forward and catching up one of the dreadfully sharp knives of his calling, brandished it aloft in selfdefence, and gave his brutal tyrant most intelligible notice that he would defend himself to the last extremity.

Unfortunately the other was too tipsy, and too much excited by rage to consider what might be the result of a further combat, and springing to renew the attack, Charles, with a moderation hardly to be expected from him, contented himself with cutting the leathern strap, short off in the hand of the anti-jacobin,

and repeating the manœuvre of the foot against the breast of the latter combatant, succeeded in throwing him back on the floor.

Maddened to be thus treated by one he esteemed a boy, one whom he had seen grow up under his own maudlin eye from childhood, the master scrambled once more to his feet, and throwing away his useless thong, snatched up another knife of the same deadly description as that which gleamed in the hand of our hero. In another instant one, if not both lives must have been lost, but just as the cobbler was about to dart upon his ill-treated subject, the light was intercepted at the doorway; the frail, but sufficient barrier of a gold-headed walking-cane, was thrust between the two combatants, and a voice of thunder, peeled in the ears of both, the stern command of

"Hold."—

Involuntarily almost, the eyes of both the fighters were directed towards the door, to see by whom the interruption of their deadly purpose was offered, and to the equal astonish-

ment of either, there stood the handsome, but somewhat portly figure of Sir George Auberville himself.

Attracted by the sound of broken glass, which fell from the windows through which the cobbler had thrust his elbow in the efforts to regain his feet, the gallant officer, who was always equally ready to do a kindness as a humane man, or to enquire into the particulars of every accident, as an idle one, had thought it worth his while to look into the cause of the affray, as he passed through the lane.

Accustomed to command, and to wear upon his brow that determined air of superiority, which goes so far in bending men to the will of those on whom nature has bestowed an elevation of intellect, even the anti-jacobin with all his cobblerian contempt of order and discipline, was for the instant perfectly abashed. His hand raised in the act to give a deadly blow with the murderous weapon it contained, remained fixed in the air, while his eye unable to endure the stern and penetrating glance of the old veteran, slowly sought the ground.

"As lubberly a style of arming, as I have seen for some time, master cobbler, how long is it since you left off the trade of cutting your own throat, for the occupation of doing the same by other people? Do you call this, sir, a decent or proper mode of exhibiting yourself before one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace?" coolly and emphatically demanded Sir George.

"Well, sir, perhaps it mayn't be, but," replied the republican, throwing down the dangerous weapon, as he spoke, "it's that young viper's fault," pointing to Charles. "He took it up first."

"To protect my own life and person, certainly I did, and will do so again whenever you dare, like a brutal tyrannical bully, as you are, to strike me for no offence."

"No offence! you pale shadowless young vagabond, is it no offence for you to go making such a fool of yourself, as to go tumbling head over heels in love with a lady so much above you? you leather-strapping young cast-away, who wouldn't even be allowed to black her shoes, or if you did get the job by accident, you'd never

be fit for the favour,—is this no offence, I say? is it no offence to carry your tomfoolery and spooneyism so far that you've made yourself as thin as a lath, and quite unfit to do my work, from sheer downright weakness, you've made such a beast of yourself? and is it no offence I say again, to carry your love-sickness so far that nothing less will serve your turn than my wife going for Dr. Gossip, to give you pill and potion, and all out of my pocket too, that has got besides your victuals, a wife and six children to support? and how I manage to do it from one week's end to another, the Lord only knows; I can't tell."

"Nor any body else, Mr. Cobbler, when they know how much you spend at the public house every day, so the less you say on that subject the better," quoth the kind-hearted Sir George, coming to the rescue of the unfortunate Charles, on whose features as he fixed his own penetrating glance, he saw the colour come and go in the most vivid alternations of deepest red and startling palor. Now Sir George was a person who either believed, or pretended to believe,

that the whole theory of love was the most perfect nonsense, fiction, and humbug from beginning to end. It was his particular pride to assert that he never yet had felt the least touch of the tender passion, and utterly defied its power for the future, quite resolved, as it should seem, that no damsel, however great her charms, should ever flutter his philosophic stoicism, or raise in his bosom, affections sufficient to cause a single pang. From this, however, it must not be imagined that Sir George was ever for a moment, what has been called a woman-hater, on the contrary, he was perfectly devoted to the sex as far as gallantry, courtesy, and high esteem went, but nothing more; and hence, therefore, the ladies only deemed his lamentable case the more helpless and incurable. Many indeed had been the attacks and assaults, long and unflinching the sieges and blockades, that his bosom of flint had gone through, but none of these fair assailants had ever been able to procure the slightest proof that they had succeeded in their design of rendering him like the rest of mankind, the slave of woman."

Thrice happy slavery where the chains are so delightful and the servitude so fascinating that even such a name and title can be acknowledged without shame!

Sir George had always, as a matter of course, been open to a due quantity of little scandals, but what bachelor of whatever age can ever hope to be without them?

To return, however, to the scene from which we have somewhat digressed, Sir George, whenever he afterwards told the story, (no unfrequent occurrence) always confessed that the idea of a cobbler being in love, struck him as something remarkably droll,—but that such a circumstance should form a ground for a master's thrashing him, and then trying to cut his throat, was still more ridiculous, while the most absurd part of all was that the lad, by his own warm and vivid blushes, his emaciated appearance, woe-begone looks, and undefending silence, seemed to bear strong testimony to the truth of the accusation.

No one could possibly possess a more keen sense of the humorous than Sir George, and

like a sensible fellow, he had always made it a rule through life wherever he found matter for a little fun, there most heartily to enjoy it. Moreover his scepticism on the existence of ardent love, would have induced him to a close examination of this case at all events, and thus urged by many considerations he resolved to probe the present charge to the uttermost.

"Well, my lad, what say you to this matter? Your master here says you have been falling in love, and therefore falling out of condition, and that the result has been a fall in the worth of your labour. What say you, do you fall into this view of the question?"

Poor Charles, with increased confusion, declined his head upon his breast, and remained silent.

"How say you," pursued the worthy justice, "are you guilty, or not guilty?"

Still, Charles seemed unable to make any reply, and after his lips had quivered for a few seconds, in a vain attempt to speak, a large tear trickled down his wasted cheek, and fell

upon the ground. Sir George could have borne the sight of blood more equably.

"Damn me, don't cry, my boy, or I shall begin to do the same," exclaimed the veteran, while a twitching of the muscles of his own face plainly proved, that he did not feel quite as jocular on the subject as he tried to appear, then turning sharply round upon the master.

"Come, I say, Mr. Cobbler, you who undertake to whack your apprentices for falling in love, just favour me with the particulars of this offence, or I may undertake to fine you for taking the law in your own hands.—You say he has fallen in love. Now, pray, who's the Lady?"

A curious sort of smile lit up the swollen features of the anti-jacobin, as he eyed the baronet for a few seconds, and then replied with a knowing nod of the head.

"Oh, I know who she is fast enough,—but it's no use naming her here."

"No use, man alive!—is that the way you answer a justice of the peace? How can you tell that I mayn't be inclined to intercede with the

fair lady, and represent to her the advantageous chance she has of forming an alliance with a young cobbler."

"Not much chance of that, Sir George, if you knew the whole!—it's very kind of you to joke upon it, but perhaps if I was to tell you, you might not think it such a good laugh after all."—

"Poh, poh, man alive!" said Sir George, his curiosity getting a little piqued, but certainly never leading him any thing near the real mark.

"Why shouldn't I do the boy a good office?—he looks a little pale and thin, now to be sure, but unless she's a dwarf, she'd like him all the better for that, as a proof of the deep impression she's made, and with a few smiles, a score of beef, and a bin of port wine, he promises to be as jolly and proper a looking man in his way, as a fellow need be; so now, Mr. Cobbler, let me have the name of the lady."

"I can't give you that, Sir George."

"Oh yes, you can, come out with it."

"Excuse me, Sir, I dont think it would be proper."

"Not proper, you jackanapes, when *I* tell you to do it! why, what do you mean by that?"

"Then, I wont tell it you, Sir George."

"But I say, fellow, you shall. I insist upon it."

"Then, I say, old gentleman, I wont, and this is my house, small as it is, and I'll thank you just to find your way out of it."

"Why you mutinous sea-lawyer-like-lubber, do you mean to address such language to me? Do as I order you directly, Sir, or look out sharp to windward to-morrow morning for this assault."

"Well, Sir George, if you will have it, whether or no, the lady this modest young man has fallen in love with, is your niece, lady Siberia Sweetbriar."

"W-H E-W!" exclaimed Sir George, his features instantly changing from the expression of growing wrath, into one of extreme surprise, not unmixed with an aspect of great merriment.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish truly! *My niece!* eh?—is that all! Boy, what do you say to this?" turning to Charles, who, with his back leaning against the wall, seemed unable to make either a disclaimer or a reply, then as he observed the silence of the culprit, Sir George added, as he tapped his cane upon the ground, "But I see it's quite unnecessary to call upon you to say anything, for your face pleads guilty to the whole indictment. Well, I must confess, you have a nice chance of success, very much so, my boy! I must wish you joy of your suit, young stitch-the-leather! Could nothing less suffice you, than falling in love with a girl sufficiently handsome to command the whole county for lovers, and with pride enough in her own disposition, to stock the whole family of Plantagenet. A cobbler's boy too! ha, ha, ha, upon my soul it is the richest thing I've heard of, since one of my midshipmen wrote to a bookseller to engrave a set of cards with his address! Why, my boy, if you were a cherub direct from aloft, you'd stand no chance of winning a smile from that quarter, unless you

could also prove yourself to be an Earl, or a Post-Captain at the least!"

"A Post-Captain, Sir," said Charles, suddenly recovering his voice, and catching at the title, but still quivering and blushing in a manner of the utmost distress, as he spoke, not daring scarcely to look up from the ground, and hardly able to command the tones of his voice, from that excess of emotion, between wounded pride and unpitied grief, which threatened every moment to find relief, in a violent burst of tears, "what is a Post-Captain, Sir? I don't understand you."

"What!" thundered the Baronet, in answer, for the first time shewing his anger towards our hero, "why, damn me, you're a moreculpable fellow, than I thought you were! It's quite bad enough for a lapstone-hammering young dog like you, to presume to fall in love with an Earl's daughter! but for any one speaking the English language, not to know what a *Post-Captain* is! egad! it's so great a crime! so irreparable a disgrace, that it were decidedly better he had never been born. I should not

have been surprised, if you had asked me what an Earl meant, but a *Post-Captain*, Sir! a *Post-Captain*, is one of the leading portions of the British Constitution! and as a Justice of the Peace, I speak as one learned in these matters. Now attend to me, boy, and I'll give you one of the most important pieces of information you ever had in your life. A *Post-Captain*, is an officer of excellent rank and illustrious station in His Majesty's Naval Service: he is a person commanding universal respect on shore, and more than Kings, Lords, and Commons, when at sea; he is an officer raised to an enviable and high post, through various stations of promotion in the Navy, by valour, skill, or distinguished birth, and instances are not wanting in the Service of some Post-Captains who combine all three in their own individual persons. I, Sir, am a Post-Captain!"

As Sir George Auberville said this, he drew himself up to his full height, until the silvery curls on his venerable head, committed divers trespasses on the works and

property of the spiders, among the cobbler's low beams, expanding at the same time his ample chest as the noble peacock, under the warm influence of the sun-beam, spreads out the gorgeous panoply of his plumage to the admiring world, only forgetting in the momentary pride and enthusiam of his naval rank, the somewhat undignified position of expatiating on his own glories to a cobbler's apprentice.

This was a trifle. The wisest of us, when vanity affords the impulse, are blind to follies and mistakes that would strike us with horror in other people. As for Charles, he listened as though he quite agreed with Sir George, that the information he had just received, was indeed the most important in his life; and certainly he devoured every word that fell from the gallant veteran, with most intense attention, assuring him in return that his ignorance arose from no fault of his, since, as he added in conclusion,

"I never had the good fortune, Sir George, to know what an education was. I never knew any parents, I never possessed any

home. All knowledge was shut out from me, save that which sorrow and misery and wretchedness have forced on my attention. I had no father to guide or protect me, no mother to love or instruct; my poor sister and myself were all the world to one another; nature taught us the use of speech, and we valued it, as we indeed proved it, a gift from Heaven. When we were first brought to this village we, neither of us, could read nor write. The mistress of the School of Industry since then has taught my sister, and she and my mistress, in their few moments of leisure have helped me on to read, to put a few letters together myself. It is true, I have no money for books. All that I can borrow I have to work for, and the little time I can get to look at those, is what I take from sleep. Is it, therefore, so great a crime, not to have known what a post-captain meant?—when I have so slight an opportunity of gaining any information?"

There was something in this humble defence that went straight to the heart of Sir George,

like an electric shock. The child of birth, wealth and prosperity himself,—this was almost the first example that had come immediately under his own eye, of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties, and such difficulties! There was something about the whole story, the forlorn and melancholy tale it told, the interesting and intelligent countenance of the speaker,—the soft and winning intonations of his voice, and the extraordinarily choice language it conveyed, for one who clearly had enjoyed such slight opportunities for copiousness or selection, that Sir George was positively staggered.

After two or three preliminary hems, which formed his invariable resource, when any thing strongly moved him, he suddenly thrust his hand deep into his breeches pocket, and pulled therefrom half-a-guinea,—approached the side of our hero, and under pretence of shaking his gold-headed cane at him,—slipped the coin as he hoped unperceived into Charles's hand, saying, as he did so,

"Well, my boy, we forgive you the matter

of your ignorance of the post-captainship, but take my advice, don't be making an infernal fool of yourself by what folks may call love.

"It's all a cheat and folly; there never was such a thing, and there never will be! young folks see a pretty toy, and wish to get hold of it, nothing more; and take an old stager's word for it, as far as the women are concerned, they take very good care that unless their toy is decked out with gold, or worldly honours, the pretty butterflies are much too knowing to be caught; and more especially so, in the case of the damsel you've clapt your eye on; there isn't a haughtier little gipsy in all the world, not that I am angry with you for falling in love with my niece, or rather thinking that you have done so; I'm all for fair play in this world, and that's your look out. All I wish to do, is to prevent your setting sail after a chase which I know carries too many guns for you; so attend to your lapstone, my lad, try and get a little fat on your bones, instead of falling in love. Industry forms the only sure road to happiness and respectability. Who is this girl that

you say has taught you to read? And where does she hang out?"

"My sister, Sir,—it was that I mentioned, she lives at the School of Industry."

"Ah! very well; I'll see, if I cannot give her a hail some day; and if I can be at all useful to her, my boy, why, for your sake, I will; I like young people to improve themselves, there is no tutor like a mind anxious for information. And as to you, master cobbler, I insist upon it, that you never presume to strike the boy again for any such trivial matter as what you call falling in love; remember if you were not quite so much in love with the pitcher, you would have been a respectable shop-keeper, instead of being condemned to exist in such a hovel as this."

"As to that, Sir George," replied the anti-jacobin somewhat doggedly, "since it has pleased heaven, that I should taste the bitterness of misfortune's cup, I don't think it becomes any man to reproach me with it."

"Misfortune's cup; damn it, man, nothing of the sort, it was your own cup, or rather the

Red Dragon's cup, and no taste of it either, let me tell you, but some years' hard sotting has done it for you, if there's any truth in wine,—so no nonsense of that kind."

"Well, well, Sir George, what's past can't be mended, so it's no use discussing it; but I have a duty to perform as a master to my apprentice; and when I see a poor, weak, pale, dirty, snubby-nosed boy like yon, presuming to fall in love with a beautiful and high born lady, like your worship's niece, I do contend that there's only one construction to be put upon it, namely, that the boy's *vartue* has been corrupted by them levelling French principles, so universally spreading among the uneducated people of this country, to the ruin of both the church and state."

"Devilish kind-hearted fellow! upon my soul! Not being able to mind your own little business without its going to ruin, you must take under your protection the whole Church and State of the United Kingdom. If now, the boy's offence had been likely to heighten the price of beer, or to take off the bitterness

of the hop, or throw a canker upon malt, I could have forgiven your burning zeal, but master cobbler, for you to run your thick, dirty, ugly pate upon a matter of politics, is too much for any man's endurance, let French principles, or any other principles, take care of themselves, and what's more, keep a sharp look out a-head, that whilst you are anxious about the principles of others, you don't happen to forget altogether to keep any of your own! The lad will do very well, if you'll let him, and if he wont, just walk up to me some fine morning, my boy, and I'll give master cobbler to understand I am a Justice of the Peace."

The gallant veteran here gave a knowing nod, to both the parties, and turning on his heel, left the miserable den, in which they stood.

As Sir George majestically walked down the lane towards the well known shop of Lamacraft the butcher, the veteran muttered in an audible voice,—

"A devilish good looking lad that, upon my word!" a fine striking intelligent countenance.

"I wonder if his sister is anything like him!" here followed a long pause of several minutes. "The school of industry! hem! ha! let's call there soon, or, a-hem! I may as well go there to-day. I am passing somewhere near it. Have I many engagements? what are they about? Let me see!"—coming to a dead halt. "I have but one or two little matters; aye, aye, they can be put off without much detriment, when a man intends to do a kindness, the more quickly it's done the better." Then vigorously grasping his cane, Sir George proceeded to go ahead, at a pace, which certainly said a great deal for the kindness of his heart, whatever other inference might be drawn from it.

Though we are ready to grant the gallant officer, every possible credit for his philanthropy, still it cannot escape our notice, that a singular anxiety seemed to have arisen in his mind, whether the unprotected child at the house of industry, was anything like her brother! In the case of any ordinary man, a wish so expressed would have carried with it,

circumstances of strong suspicion! but in the present instance, where the utterer was known to entertain such a contempt for the power of love, if not indeed to be an entire sceptic as to its reality, of course such a suspicion can no longer arise, and the expression itself, as well as the intention of the utterer, became perfectly harmless, and divested of every particle of doubt.

CHAPTER XIII.

The School of Industry was at some distance from the den of the Church-and-State Cobbler, and certainly the worthy Matron opened her eyes considerably, when, in the midst of her little kingdom, she received the card of Sir George Auberville, with a request for her immediate attendance.

With sundry misgivings the venerable ancient made her appearance, carefully adjusting her frill and cap, with the aid of divers of her senior scholars beforehand, lest she should fail to make that due impression which all school-mistresses, whether in houses of industry or idleness, naturally desire to make on bachelor baronets. The worthy matron, on a moderate calculation, not being more than 85 or 86 at

the outside, it certainly must be acknowledged that much of the trepidation felt by the inestimable lady was lessened, we cannot exactly say relieved, when Sir George enquired for a certain Miss James.

This at once told the trembling fair one that not to her, but to one of her numerous charges, was the gallant Baronet's visit owing. Something like a change of temper, certainly a change of visage, was the instantaneous result of this discovery, on her part. She would be glad to know what might be the purport of his coming, whether he knew her or any of her relations, and so forth, together with many other enquiries she made as to his being armed with any authority to carry off the young lady.

With that frankness which formed so prominent a part of his character, Sir George assured her that he merely called from taking an interest in her brother, and the matron's scruples being thus relieved, she slowly vanished to return with the aforesaid charge.

While the venerable dame left the room, Sir George had recourse to the time-out-of-

mind occupation of looking out of the window, and whistling. Presently some footsteps approached the door, and concluding that it was the matron and her pupil coming, Sir George, without turning round, carelessly exclaimed—

"Well, my dear, how——"

He was going to add, "How are you this morning?"—when suddenly facing about, in full expectation of seeing some sort of hoydenish candidate for the post of upper housemaid, his words were absolutely chained upon his lips by beholding before him a tall and elegantly formed girl, scarcely 19 years of age, if you might judge from her features and smooth fair forehead, but of a far more mature period of life if you took, as the criterion, the rounded and graceful outline of her figure, which all the coarseness of her dress could neither vulgarize nor disguise.

Sir George was an old veteran, and not much accustomed to be taken at fault by anything: it was some time, moreover, since he left off blushing; but he afterwards confessed, that on his first turning round and thus unex-

pectedly meeting the fair creature then before him, so different from anything he had been prepared to see, he underwent very much the same sort of shock which we all experience on taking the sea for the first time in the spring—a sort of flutter in the chest that amounted almost to a difficulty of getting breath. Young as she evidently was, with all the intuitive perception of a woman, she could not help observing that she had called forth some strong sensation in the gallant officer's mind; and without knowing why, the colour flew into her temples and thence gradually crept down her beautiful face, until both the neck and bosom shared in the roseate suffusion, and drooping her head in all the confusion of one who feels afraid and ashamed, without being able to say why or wherefore, she waited for Sir George to express the object of his visit. Sir George, as a kind hearted man, plainly perceived her embarrassment, and would have given the world to terminate it, but unfortunately he knew not how!!

Once or twice he made an effort to stammer

forth some common-place observation, but before he had proceeded with three sentences, he discovered himself to be paying one of those courtly compliments which he was accustomed to address to people of his own rank; and conscious how ridiculous these would appear to a girl educated like the one before him, he endeavoured to mend the selection, discovered that the effort was vain, and came to a dead halt.

At last, from some electric sympathy, we presume, the cheeks of the old veteran, that had never known a blush for at least some five and thirty summers, lighted up with as fine a carbuncle crimson as four bottles of wine could have caused in any moderate minded commander.

Stammering out "Madam—that is, my dear —that is, I beg your pardon, Madam;" and convulsively snatching at a chair, Sir George pushed it towards her, and in the noise of so doing concluded that he had very cleverly concealed his own want of conversation. Miss James, however, shocked at the idea of being

offered a seat while the venerable antique was standing in her presence, glanced her eyes timidly towards the matron, and muttered something which she herself could not hear nor anybody else understand. Sir George, however, conceived what might possibly be its meaning; and placing a seat for the antiquity, and another for himself, in a few seconds they were all seated,—the young girl, if possible, looking more confused than ever; the matron watching, with more than lynx-eyed vigilance, to hear what the gallant Baronet had to advance; and the worthy veteran himself now, for the first time, perceiving that the formalities of the moment were increased to a tenfold degree of horror, by the whole quorum being thus stiffly seated.

After two or three preliminary hems, while the Baronet cordially wished first the matron and then himself in a very warm and unmentionable latitude, and making sundry efforts to force out something like a reasonable piece of talk, Sir George wound up at last with the lame and impotent conclusion, that it was "a very fine morning, Madam!"

"Very!" was the laconic reply of the worthy matron to a sentiment so eminently British; and the trio were reduced to the same state of awkward silence as before. After a pause of a few seconds, during which it was clear that the antique would not come to his relief, Sir George very gently observed, "I have done myself the pleasure of calling upon you, Madam:"—here he came to another dead halt, and after clearing his throat for a few seconds, he rallied back again, and came once more to the charge.—"I have done myself the pleasure of calling upon you, Madam;" but beyond this interesting portion of the conversation he seemed unable to advance. After swearing gently to himself for a brief space, and wondering what had come to him, he took out his snuff box, flourished away a little with that, and then made a third essay in the same words: "I have done myself the pleasure of calling upon you, Madam;"—and here, finding he was still wind-bound, he hove to once more, fixing his eyes upon the regular features of Miss James.

The venerable antique, after waiting for any further disclosure in vain, at last replied—"I see you have, Sir; but really I can't tell why." This was bringing things to a crisis, and Sir George felt he could no longer avoid giving an account of his proceedings.

"Why, Madam," stammered the gallant officer, thankful that he was at last compelled to say something for himself,—"I called to enquire after this young lady's health."

"It was always perfectly good, Sir," said the matron, briefly.

"And to know if I could be of any service to her."

"In what way, Sir George?" demanded the antique, with one of those disagreeable pick-lock sort of questions which are occasionally so very difficult to deal with. To say the truth, Sir George had never thought about the matter. His visit was originally one, in a great degree, of curiosity, which he thought might probably end by his giving the girl whom he expected to see, a matter of five or ten shillings, and nothing further. And now he found himself

drawn into an offer of service, simply from not knowing what better to say; and having committed himself to such offer, the worst of the joke was that he was utterly ignorant how the party in question could—at any rate by him—be served!

Looking to the station and the rank of life to which girls of the house of industry were usually destined, he knew that the elegant situation of housemaid or upper servant, or something equally exalted, would be the thing to name: but how could he, a gallant officer, propose any such degradation to any girl half so beautiful. Yet an offer of some sort he must make; and here again flashed before his eyes the awful responsibility of making some proposal, which his niece, so much interested in the matter, might neither sanction nor ratify. There was only one position in his household which he felt he could at all have the hardihood to propose to so pretty looking a creature; and glad, at any cost, to relieve himself from a dilemma, he resolved to dash it out at a venture, and take all the consequences on his impetuous head.

"Madam, if you have nothing better in contemplation, and would like to accept the situation of companion to my niece, I am sure she would be most happy to have you. At least," muttered the gallant officer, "I hope so, or if not, we shall have a little fighting about it."

"Thank you, Sir," modestly replied Anna, blushing deeply as she spoke; while the matron looked as angrily at Sir George as if the latter had been proposing a sentence of decapitation at the least. The gallant officer, too well accustomed to read woman's looks to be at any loss in interpreting this intelligence, here ventured to express a hope that her ladyship had no objection to the intended change.

"Oh, none, Sir," replied the venerable dame, with an aspect that would have been invaluable to any vinegar manufacturer; and then adding, in a dulcet tone, some indistinct reply from which Sir Charles plainly gathered that she was in no hurry to part with this blooming specimen of her establishment. But if any expression of regret was about to issue

from that quarter, it was decisively arrested by the party most interested, who, with a smile that penetrated to the inmost fold of the baronet's flannel waistcoat, dropped him a low curtesy, and in the midst of sundry blushes and divers symptoms of confusion, at length found courage to say—"I shall never forget your kindness in this matter, Sir George Auberville; for if there is any situation which I should have most coveted, it is that of waiting on a young lady so beautiful and so amiable as your niece."

"A pretty pair there will be of you," Sir George was just about to reply, when the antique countenance of the matron meeting his eye, seemed to freeze the words half way; and just getting out enough for Anna to conjecture what was following in the mind of the speaker,—the latter soon became the most embarrassed of the two, and was just thinking in his own mind whether he might venture to offer to the fair orphan any money or not,—when, with a readiness that charmed while it perplexed him, the latter enquired

"when it would suit Sir George's family that she should commence her services?"

The gallant Baronet certainly was not prepared for such a vigorous demonstration, and hardly knowing what reception his proposal was to meet at home, a degree of consternation momentarily shewed itself in his countenance; and, like a sort of telegraphic communication, was as instantly answered by a corresponding look of disappointment in that of the young creature near him. Eager to chase away this feeling, in an instant forth came the Baronet's purse. His scruples on this head suddenly melted like snow in the sunbeams. A five or ten shilling piece we said he had contemplated when first calling at the house in question; now a vague idea flashed across his mind that a sovereign or two might not be unacceptable. In went his fingers among the silken meshes; what was it he felt, a five pound note? forth it came in an instant; on opening it he saw the word ten in the corner; well, no matter, there could be no doubt of her being a "remarkably pretty creature," and in the next instant that

precious publication of Henry Hase's name, was thrust between the taper fingers of the gentle orphan, while the donor hastily muttered, "There, my dear; there are two or three little articles you may want to purchase beforehand; and as soon as my niece is ready to receive you, I will let you know without fail." Hastily waving his hand to the speechless matron, in another second Sir George had gained the street.

CHAPTER XI.

Sir George Auberville was a man of birth and ability, and had therefore in the course of his career been thrown into many and divers scenes. We have already said that he had distinguished himself in action; but, strange to relate, (we do not pretend to account for the fact), Sir George afterwards confessed he never felt himself in so singular a position as on gaining the street that morning.

The reader knows he was an elderly gentleman, and elderly people have certain notions about money; it first vaguely occurred to him that he certainly had been indulging in a few minutes very expensive amusement.

"Fifteen minutes conversation with a pauper girl for ten pounds!" murmured Sir George. "What the devil does it mean?"

But this was not the extent of his misfortunes; altogether he certainly felt very queer; there was a vague restless inclination to go back again, together with a certain looking forward to something he knew not what, a reproachfulness of the past, he could scarce tell why; a disinclination to turn to his accustomed employments; these symptoms, with a perpetually recurring exclamation, "a devilish pretty girl, upon my word,"—altogether formed a concatenation of dangerous symptoms, which, if the sufferer had fully understood them, would in all probability have made him still less happy: to crown his present grief, if that were necessary, Doctor Gossip, who was coming up the village, overheard one of his exclamations as to the charms of the fair orphan; and with that love of mischief which was one of the peculiarities of the doctor's good nature, repeated it.

"Yes, Sir George, she is extremely beautiful! no doubt! may I ask the name of this fair incognita?"

Sir George was taken at a disadvantage, or

the doctor would have paid dearly for this liberty with one not particularly noted for allowing any one to trespass on his station with impunity; perhaps, however, consciousness of being fairly caught deprived the gallant officer of repartee, and after trying for a few seconds to consider the doctor's joke as a very good one, and graciously laughing at the same, Sir George replied,

"Why, doctor, I was alluding to a model of a little craft, which a friend of mine is thinking of taking into his service as a yacht."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," replied the other, disarmed of his suspicions; and after a few of the usual enquiries about nothing, which occupy country gentlemen so deeply, they separated. The doctor's mind recurring to some desperate case, and the post-captain muttering something not very polite about the doctor's eyes, as Sir George wended his way homewards with a strong reluctance to inform his niece that he had provided her with a companion that she had never dreamt of requiring.

In the meanwhile grief had succeeded plea-

sure in the bosom of the young orphan, for whose advancement the gallant sailor had shewn himself so solicitous.

No sooner had the latter left the room which contained that striking contrast, the matron and the maid, than the latter, full of delight at what had happened, turned round to exhibit to her hitherto kind superior the proofs of Sir George Auberville's generosity.

"Aye," said the venerable dame, shaking her head, "I see what it is, a ten-pound note! well; all I have to remark on the matter is this, either Sir George Auberville is a very bad wicked old man, or else a mainsight better than either I or anybody else in these parts ever yet gave him credit for."

"Bad?" repeated Anna, opening her eyes, not only with deep astonishment but not without some feeling also of strong indignation, at the idea of anybody presuming to entertain such a supposition of an angel, who could not only clothe himself in ten-pound notes but bestow a few of them occasionally for the clothing of others not so well off.

Her antediluvian companion seeing she was not quite understood, laid a finger on one of Anna's well-rounded shoulders, and with much significance remarked,

"My dear, he is *a man*."

"Yes, Madam, a gentleman," replied Anna, as if wholly unable to discover why this wholesale charge of sex should carry with it such an implication of atrocity.

"My dear, you don't know them as well as I do," replied the other, shaking her grey locks; and opening a line of deductions, which, if they did not say much for the character of man, certainly said still less for her own.

Anna contented herself with replying, "Very true, Ma'am; but still I do not see."

"No, child, because you won't see; but I'll soon open your eyes, I warrant me! Do you suppose that an old man like that has nothing better to do with his time and money, than to walk about hither and thither like Jack-in-the-green giving ten-pound notes to every one he meets?"

Anna, with downcast eyes, replied, "She

certainly did not accuse him of any such raging-lion propensity." And perhaps it may have crossed her mind, that had such been Sir George's indiscriminate failing, she the orphan would never have heard one word alleged against him.

"No, child, I warrant me he does not; he knows who to select. You wont find him by any accident throwing about his wicked ten-pound notes to old people instead of the young, nor yet to the ugly in the place of the good looking."

"I don't understand you, Madam," said poor Anna, reddening.

"Oh! of course you don't, child. It takes Baronets now to bring you to a right understanding, of course it does: but just attend to this, if there should be such a thing as a young orphan in the village remarkably pretty, no one to look after her, not over prudent herself, perhaps a little vain in the bargain, mark how quickly the Baronet finds her out. It is so *very* convenient to have people at your house, no one can overlook there, you know; brothers

can't complain of masters being civil. I have known nieces, too, wonderfully convenient; particularly when their pride won't let them enter into their own proper society: and they are so lonely, they must have a companion, forsooth, kept at rack and manger for them night and morning, poor little dears!—Their case is very hard, truly; such companions, I warrant me, have plenty of ten-pound notes, and plenty of fine clothes besides! However, I say nothing; of course it is nothing to me: only if any girl under my charge was to be placed in such a dangerous situation, it might be my duty to guard her against it; it might be my duty to interfere, and prevent her meeting with such ruin."

On hearing this, Anna, who seemed taken by surprise, burst into tears, and offering to be wholly guided by the advice of her disinterested and exemplary friend, expressed her utter ignorance of the possibility of any such depravity in the heart of man, and instantly tendered the ten pound note to be returned to Sir George Auberville.

"Don't offer to me your wicked money," said the virtuous matron; "I will have nothing to do with it. I have no value for such things, not I; I only thought it my duty to tell you what I see, in this matter. If you choose to go to ruin headlong, pray do! I shall not suffer by it, only don't come here afterwards! This is the abode of virtue, not the retreat of vice, and above all, remember I have done *my* duty."

With this charitable peroration, the worthy matron swept out of the room, greatly consoled, no doubt, on reflecting that if she was no longer young and handsome, the courted of gay and gallant old bachelors, and the receiver of those pleasant little wickednesses, ten pound notes, she was at least possessed of a bountiful fund of malignity, on which she could draw at pleasure, to poison the happiness of those who possessed the advantages so much envied by women, because so naturally prized by men, —the spring and bloom of life.

It is somewhat singular too, the extensive range which good people have in what they term, "their duty," and which treating the

subject in a broad way, may be generally classed to include every thing that can most annoy their neighbours. People who are given to what they term "doing their duty," are remarkably fortunate in this respect. Their duty rarely consists of inflicting any pain upon themselves, however great the amount it may lead them to impose on others. I never yet heard of a single individual, out of this large set of excelling folk, whose duty led him to strip his dinner of a single course, that he might bestow it on the starving poor, or of one whose duty led him from a warm comfortable bed, to prowl the streets in search of those who are perishing in the snow. Providence, in extreme good nature to these people seems to have placed their duties in quite a different sphere.

Any ill natured scandal, that nobody else can be found to carry, any disagreeable intelligence of ships, lives, or property lost, bankruptcy suspected, or mistresses discovered, all these and similar topics, heaven seems to have placed under their peculiar care.

In the present instance, the worthy matron

satisfied, it must be supposed, that she had done all in her power to murder the happiness of the young orphan, dressed herself with peculiar care, for two especial objects. The first was to go to chapel, to have omitted which, would, in her own language, have "inflicted a grievous sin" upon her conscience; the other was ostensibly to take home some work to a lady, who was one of the patronesses of the Institution; but in reality to comfort the delicate health of the invalid, by the information that her good gentleman, as she termed her husband, rode to Teignmouth three times a week, to call upon an interesting young lady, whose husband, so the young lady said, was unfortunately gone to sea: a place of retreat where some ladies find it very convenient to keep their husbands, for very indefinite periods.

In the mean-while Anna retired to her room in full experience of one of those bitter sorrows of life which meet us at every turn. Now she thought of returning the money back to Sir George Auberville, and at once declining his offer, still, as she came to this conclusion,

the keenest pang shot through her breast, at remembering how many comforts the sum in question would procure for her beloved brother, whose declining health had cost her many a restless hour of grief. Then it occurred to her that he was the proper, and, indeed, the only person she could consult as to what ought to be her conduct on the occasion, and yet how could she breathe into a brother's ear those base insinuations with which the woman who "did her duty" made so little scruple of poisoning her own?

Here, fortunately, her own good sense, of which she possessed no slight share, suggested considerable doubts as to the truth of those insinuations; more especially it occurred to her that had Sir George Auberville deserved the base, dark picture the matron had drawn, it was utterly impossible but that she must have heard some rumour of the kind before. Yet not a breath of similar scandal had ever reached her ear. Then again under the eyes of his niece she would at once find an able and willing protectress against any insult. Though

the sum of money he had given was large, for her small deserts, yet Sir George was a sailor, and one, therefore, privileged to be liberal even to profusion. She could not help remembering, also, that in many of the matron's remarks, a considerable spirit of jealousy peeped out, and though she had heard passing allusions at times to her comeliness of person, and, like other young people, had before now consulted her glass, rather in the timid hope of discovering if there were in her features that which might attract those she loved, than with any presumptuous feeling of exulting in undoubted charms; yet she was sufficiently well versed in the feelings of her sex to know that, whether beautiful or not, yet if any other woman thought her so, and had such thoughts confirmed by the open and undisguised admiration of the other sex in her presence, this to such a woman would prove an offence beyond all forgiveness.

In the midst of her dilemma, and while hesitating whether her most prudent course would not be to wait, and see how Sir George

acted, a message arrived asking her to get ready to walk with her brother, who would call for her shortly after sunset. This determined her to take no step until she had, at any rate, seen Charles, and if she did not risk tantalizing him by the mention of a benefit that might never accrue, at least she was determined to sound him as to Sir George's general character, and whether he really was likely to prove such an ogre, as the woman of duty had painted him.

CHAPTER XV.

Wholly unconscious to what an extent his recent benefactor had been stirring the waters within the house of Industry, Charles no sooner saw him depart from the humble stall of his master, than he felt he was witnessing the retreat of the only true male friend he had ever possessed. Up to this point, so melancholy had been his position, that Abel Morris, despite of all those Jewish qualities that so prominently marked his character, monopolized perhaps the greatest part of his esteem; since he had at least always manifested this one inestimable quality in the eyes of youth, that namely of sinking the difference of age between them, and talking with his young reader on terms of the most perfect equality, and receiving all Charles' opinions as if they were

entitled to the full consideration of manhood; but in Sir George Auberville, he beheld not only the uncle of his idol, the protector of himself from cruel wrong, the generous benefactor who had given him more wealth, small as it was, than he had ever before possessed; not only the man of rank and station, but also one who to the nameless charms of those winning manners, which are the general accompaniments of birth and breeding, and to anoble mind, superadded all the frank kindness which universal belief has attributed to the sailor's disposition; but more than all, Sir George was the only man whom Charles believed capable of listening to his insane passion for Lady Siberia without ridiculing him for it; and in addition to this, a matter for which Charles could never be sufficiently grateful, Sir George had unintentionally pointed out the only way in which he could ever win that inestimable prize.

"A post-captain," muttered Charles to himself, "I'll find out some book in which I can read about them, before I am another day

older;" though, as Sir George's figure gradually lessened in the distance, Charles felt as if he were losing his protecting angel, yet he also became sensible that he had left behind him a precious legacy of hope, which our hero resolved to turn to the best account.

From his reverie, however, he was quickly disturbed by the worthy Anti-jacobin cobbler, or, as he would be termed, in the more polite parlance of the day, his excellent Conservative master, who insisted that, if he did not instantly surrender up the money Sir George had given Charles, for him, the said cobbler, to conserve, he would proceed then, and there to knock out the brains of the aforesaid Charles.

This doctrine, strange as it may appear, Charles much reprobated, and after considerable squabbling, and threats on the part of the unfortunate apprentice, of appealing once more to Sir George, the matter was compromised by the lad's generously consenting to give up one quarter of the gift, on being allowed peaceable possession of the remainder;

and yet it was a sacrifice fully felt by its unfortunate victim, as he had already in his own mind disposed of the whole sum, which left, as we shall see, but a small portion indeed to the enjoyment of self; it is however a misfortune of the human condition, that all smaller states, must purchase peace from the larger at almost any sacrifice.

The worthy Conservative was formed for a perfect disciple of the Holy Alliance, though it had not then been instituted, and after a long lecture to his pupil on the improprieties of his ways, and on the little expectation such an apprentice could ever form of becoming a respectable tradesman, and having "his stake in society," he next turned to give audience to his wife, who had been waiting this favour for some time, and now begged the further obligation of a shilling to get the children some bread.

Whether this application was connected in the Conservative's mind, with the agitated question of the Corn Laws we know not; but to say the least of it, he certainly treated the

matter in an abrupt form. Disdaining all further debate, he buttoned fast in his pocket, the exorcised shilling, for fear it might have caught any contagion of humanity, and be guilty of the philanthropical absurdity of leaping out to the famishing wife and children.

Bestowing on the former a mono-syllabic expression of regard, which less delicate men have confined to the designation of the female dog, Mr. Tyler departed from his own threshold, and made straight for that of the Red Dragon.

Thus adjured, the unfortunate Mrs. Tyler gave utterance to her feelings in a flood of tears, while Charles, sparing no effort to mitigate grief so natural, slipped into her hand another quarter of Sir George's present, and sent her out of the house to purchase food, while he, with still further self-devotion, forewent the holiday that had been ordered for his health, to take down his tools and finish some work which his master had promised to send home two days before, well knowing the money was ready to be paid on delivery.

At any rate, said Charles, as he devoted himself to the task, while I am with her, she shall receive all the benefit I can render, and though that mayn't be long, Heaven will raise her some far better friend.

CHAPTER XVI.

Having accomplished the end he sought, and not only furnished his work but obtained the money for it and delivered it to the wife, Charles for the first time during many weeks issued forth from the wretched hovel of his master with feelings something akin, however remotely, to happiness. The satisfaction which industry never fails to produce, was now added to the first glimmering of possibility that had yet lighted his hitherto hopeless passion. She might smile on a post-captain; what golden words were these! Again and again he implored blessings on the head of Sir George, whose lips had thus unconsciously furnished a clue to the labyrinth of his ambitious love.

In pursuit of his determination to gain every possible information as to the Royal Navy, he

barely allowed himself time to lay out a third quarter of his money in some little presents which he knew would be acceptable to his sister, when he hastened off to Abel Morris, to devote a portion of the small remainder in obtaining the information he so desired.

"Well, my prince of students, what book do you want this evening," cried Abel, the moment he descried our hero approaching. "If you go on as hard as you have done lately, upon my conscience and my soul I must take in a new stock. What line can I suit you in now? whether will you fire your ambition by biography, enlarge the soul by history, soothe it by poetry, or indulge it by fiction—the vain and profitless novel, as the good people call that kind of literature, when their eyes get too weak for such small text. Whether will you ——"

"What, Abel, still going on with your rhodomontade? I am sure, Morris, you must have served your time as book-selling mountebank somewhere, though you are now ashamed to confess it."

"What book was it you said you wanted?" resumed Abel, abstractedly, pretending not to notice what the other had said as to the mountebank system.

"Why, Abel, if you must know, I want you to get me some book that treats about post-captains."

"Oh! to be sure I will," replied Abel; who in any matter at all out of the usual routine, was as ignorant and assured as need be.

"Let me see; post-captains? Oh! ay, to be sure, Sinbad the Sailor is full of nothing else."

"That I am sure it is not," replied Charles, laughing, "Sinbad the Sailor I have by heart, and it does not contain the word from beginning to end."

"The word, the word; why no, perhaps it may not contain the exact word! and what of that? There is the essence of the thing, you know; the spirit of the matter, that is what you want."

"Come, come, Master Abel, none of your usual humbug; I want something that treats of the Royal Navy."

"Oh! now I see. The Royal Navy! Paul Jones then is the book you must have; ever read Paul Jones?"

"No, I have not, Sir."

"Ah! that is the work that will let you into the light of it. I was thinking of Paul Jones when I talked of Sinbad the Sailor. You can't have a better than Paul any way." And raising his gaunt person on a chair, he took down from a top shelf the treasure in question, gave to it his usual brace of blows on the counter to get rid of superfluous dust, and then handed it over to our hero, saying, "There, Sir; there is the first book in the English language, whatever the second may be."

"As to the second, Abel, you know very well you have not that book in your shop! As long as I have known you, every book you've ever had in your hand was the first book in its language, always provided it were your own property; but as invariably the worst book in the language, if it were the property of anybody else."

"Why I must confess, Master Cobbler, mine is about the primest collection of volumes I ever met with! It may be wrong in me, a poor person without a penny to bless myself with, and in a trumpery village like this, with none but rude and uneducated boys for my customers, to have made such a collection. I acknowledge the crime. It certainly is the first collection in this county, and I am a silly extravagant old man for having put it together at the cost of a whole life; but you see when men are devoted to science, when the mind is fully embued —"

"Come, come, Abel, do spare us any more of that gammon; you forget that there are no strangers standing by, and that you are wasting all these flowers of your professional eloquence on one who has not only mended your old shoes for the last two years, but has read nearly every book in your shop; you know it must prove hopeless to take him in."

"Why as to that, Master Charles, certainly cobbling my old shoes may enable you to prate of my 'whereabout;' but as to having read my

books, I do assure you I have not the least intention to insinuate from that fact, that you are at all more acquainted with their value than you were before you began."

"Well done Abel; you are a very fine fellow in your way; for you certainly have this little peculiarity, of first making out a virtue to be a vice, and then modestly confessing yourself guilty of it. But come, give me Paul Jones, by this time I might have been through the first three chapters. But tell me who was Paul Jones; was he a post-captain?"

"Oh, to be sure he was; one of the most distinguished ones in our navy."

"Was he, indeed?" and Charles's eyes sparkled with delight; "how long was it, Abel, since you read the book?"

"Why, as to that, I never read that particular book."

"Well, but where did you read his life at all?"

"Why I can't exactly charge my memory; not as to reading his life precisely; but still—"

"What an old humbug you are, Morris;

you read nothing and you know nothing, but you are ready to give your fixed opinion on every thing! Placed in a shop where one would think you would be reading from morning to night, I would defy the devil himself to say he ever caught you doing more than spelling over a title-page." And darting out of Abel's shop, without waiting for the old eccentric to reply, Charles was soon at the door of his sister's temporary dwelling.

The Matron being still engaged in doing her duty, as before described, and Anna having risen by her good conduct to be one of the head monitresses of the school, no objection was raised to the proposed walk of the orphans, and they accordingly set out together.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE month at which our story has now arrived, was that of June, when Dawlish appears in all its beauty; the day had been extremely warm, and now, when sunset brought in the night breeze, sweeping down that sweet retired valley towards the sea, it came laden with thousand fragrances of all the summer flowers that bloomed along the vale, while the moon nearly at its zenith, was just rising over the distant horizon of the placid sea, and sent its quivering and uncertain beams along the scarcely ruffled waters, till the line of light and glory seemed especially directed to the feet of the beholder.

The tide had been some two hours on the flood, and as each booming wave rolled in towards the shore, the loud yet soft and regular

murmur fell on the ear like some hallowed melody from nature's hand, soothing the ruffled spirit, and enabling it to enjoy to the utmost each beauty of the hour.

Charles and his sister descended to the beach as nearly as possible in the middle of the bay, where the Daw emptied its humble stream into the vast recipient of all waters; here was a sort of neutral ground, on which, from its exposed position, few, or any occupants seemed inclined to intrude. No boats sought shelter, nor in general did the lovers of the romantic make here their promenade, even those patronizers of the sequestered and lonely, the race of lovers, seemed by common consent, to have abandoned such a trysting spot, which, however it might have been recommended by its loneliness, would certainly have exposed its frequenters to be the observed of all observers, a station, likely enough, it is true, to excite the gentle passion towards its object, but not one generally sought for love making, *more amantium.*

After gazing for some time at the beauty of the night, our young couple formed themselves a

seat on the steps of one of the solitary gentleman's bathing-machines. These, by universal consent, had been banished to this central Siberia as the only mode of keeping this dangerous property within the bounds of propriety; they stood like a cluster of licentious old bachelors withering apart from the rest of society in their old age,—a sort of moral land-mark to the rising generation. Here then Anna sat down and commenced reading Paul Jones to her brother.

They had not proceeded far, however, in their narrative, when all attention to its events was utterly frustrated by the approaching clamour of a large crowd of persons coming rapidly down to the beach from the town, and bearing with them innumerable nets, oars, spars, and other nautical matters, proclaiming their instant intentions to shoot the seine.

That some unusual chance presented itself, was evident from the extraordinary concourse of towns people who formed part of the procession; and from the broken exclamations which our hero now heard, he became aware of the fact, that an immense shoal of herrings which

had been playing some miles off in the bay throughout the day, had now sought the shallower water, and courted capture almost opposite the place which Charles had selected for the luxury of a quiet read.

Complaint was useless, and since nothing was left them but submission, our humble friends at once closed their volume, and hurrying away from the rude cries of delight, approval, caution, and innumerable other emotions, sought out the western extremity of the bay, and passed down "behind the rocks," to use the Dawlish parlance, where they knew themselves to be secure from interruption, and sufficiently far off from the tumult, not to be disturbed by it. Having soon gained a particular spot named the Bishop's-parlour, from its being entirely enclosed by precipitous sides of the common red sandstone, they there seated themselves in full view of the moon-lit sea. Here Anna, with all the thoughtlessness of youth, lavished the beauty and the strength of her young bright eyes upon the pages of the daring buccaneer.

Fortunately, the work was printed in large

old fashioned type, and this aided, by the fact of the moon being very near its full, enabled her to decypher the story without much injury to the gentle organs thus hardly tried.

As Charles listened to the tale, it certainly appeared to him somewhat singular, that a Post Captain should have commenced his career in the somewhat startling capacity of a Pirate, against the very commerce of that country of which he was afterwards, according to the account of Abel Morris, so distinguished an ornament; still Fortune certainly had odd changes in her wheel, and he therefore quietly sat by, listening to the sweet and gentle tones of his sister's voice, his arm encircling her slight waist, and his figure protecting her as much as possible from the cold rock that supported them, wondering in his own mind when that part was to arrive which treated of the Post-Captain.

Anna on her side, delighted with the all-absorbed attention of her listener, cheerfully read on, and though not so engaged in the interest of the tale as her brother, yet keenly enjoying the beauty of the night, the savage

grandeur of the scene around, and more than all, the rapture of being thus pressed to the bosom of one who loved her so tenderly, of one who in very purity she might and did adore with all the soft intensity of woman's passion.

She heeded not the lapse of time, the stronger and the colder blowing of the fresh sea gale upon her delicate cheek, the quickening and increasing roar of the waves upon the rocks around, nor indeed any thing, but the gradual progress of a sister's pleasant duty, as she turned over page after page of her volume, rewarded by the affectionate pressure of the arm around her figure, and the frequent and tender kiss on her soft warm neck.

At length, infinitely to Charles' mortification and anger, the tale drew to a close without the narrator, whoever he might be, making the slightest effort to render the redoubted Paul Jones any thing more or less than a cut-throat of the most indubitable description, and as Charles plainly perceived, no more of a Post-Captain, than he himself unfortunately was.

For some minutes, however, he vented his wrath upon the fair name and fame of the sufficient Abel, who certainly deserved a cane for his presumption, while Anna was equally engaged in laughing at and soothing the disappointment of her brother.

For some time, Charles remained gazing at the moon, lost in thought, partly in contemplation of what his future destiny was likely to prove, and partly in considering whether he ought not to confide to his sister, the nature of his intentions respecting his future life.

She also, during this pause, was occupied in silently debating how far she was called upon to inform her brother what had taken place respecting Sir George Auberville; both, however, from motives equally kind to the other, came to a resolution of preserving silence for at least some time to come, Charles, from knowing that the intelligence of his intended departure must be a heavy blow to one, whose chief protection he was, and Anna, from fearing she might raise hopes that were destined never to be realized. At length, how-

ever, the lateness of the hour, seemed to force itself on Charles' attention and lifting his sister from the place where she had been seated, proposed an immediate return home.

Scarcely however had they taken two steps in pursuit of this resolution, when, to his extreme annoyance, he discovered that the tide had imperceptibly come in and surprised them. The point of rock, round which they had to pass, was now at least three feet deep in water, and though this was in itself a trifling matter, yet as it was by no means the only, or the most projecting promontory which he had to traverse, it followed as a matter of course, that, in order to get round the deepest headland, it might be necessary for him to swim, and so support his sister.

Numerous dangers threatened this proceeding, even supposing that her nerves were sufficiently firm to endure the disagreeable process of swimming by night, when imagination begins to see a thousand additional terrors. Calm as the sea was, Charles reflected with horror, on the possibility of her gentle

form being thrown against the pointed edges, amongst which their course must be steered; the heavy responsibility that he would take upon himself in risking his sister's life, unable to support herself in the water, and therefore wholly dependent upon her presence of mind in so novel and trying a position, for resting upon him in just the exact proportion, that would be sufficient to support her weight, amid the waves, without incumbering his exertions. To say the least of it, after being floated for nearly half a mile, she would have to walk three times the distance in her wet clothes.

Her frame was already delicate, though not so much so as his own, and he shuddered as affection anticipated the possible effects of so severe an exposure, but still he determined upon having the benefit of her thoughts upon the subject, as she only could decide how far the fact of her staying out all night, while the tide rose to its full height and ebb'd once more, might prejudice her in the eyes of her superior.

With her usual quickness, however, Anna had already perceived the danger, and weighed over the result, and as if it were possible for her to have known what had passed in her brother's mind, she looked up with a laughing manner, which dispelled half the difficulties of their dilemma, and said, "Don't think of attempting it Charles, there is no reason why we should run any such risk. We have a space to walk up and down within this little bay, the sea is quiet, and in all probability, the tide will not approach within some feet of the rock, and four or five hours more may set us at liberty.

Happy was it for our hero that the ties of consanguinity enabled him to enjoy in security, the society of a being so dangerous to the peace of any stranger of his age and sex. Dangerous as the thrall of beauty is at all times, it is only when combined with the powers of intellect, and a gentle conciliating disposition, that the full magic of its witchery is felt.

Who would not court any additional peril to be thrown alone with such a creature, on such a

night, under similar circumstances? With no human being near, the solitude of the desert around tempting the soul forth from its inmost recesses, while danger remained sufficiently at hand to dissolve the icy forms of ordinary society, and to draw into the closest union those whose common welfare it equally threatened, yet still not so imminent as to deny the heart the power of entertaining the softest and warmest emotions! Surely he must be either more or less than human, who, disengaged in his affections, should be thrown into such jeopardy and escape unharmed.

In the warm romance of youth and passion, how many a young heart already stricken, sighs at the thought of such a golden opportunity of love! Dearly as Charles was attached to his sister, how many years of life would he not have sacrificed, could he have changed the fair being beside him, beautiful as she was, into the, to him, far more exquisite person of Lady Siberia. This feeling it was that passed again and again through his mind, as he folded his sister's figure still more closely to

his own, and imprinted a thousand kisses on the dazzling forehead, that in the clear moonlight of that calm night sham'd the faint mockery of sculptured alabaster.

Poor Anna was utterly taken in by this extacy, since, she had believed all these tokens of affection to be most genuinely meant for herself.

Though many of the immediate neighbours of Charles had heard the joke against him, of his presumptuous love, it had never yet reached the ears of his sister, who would have mourned more deeply at such a source of future misery for her dearest friend, than for almost any other misfortune that could have befallen him.

She, like the rest of the little world at Dawlish, had gazed in distant admiration on the titled heiress, and read in her faultless features the full confirmation of the general rumour, that ascribed the most unbending pride to be the great blot of her disposition the haughty carriage, the imperious brow, the eyes of fire, and lips that spoke with the most

cutting irony, all these in Anna's eyes combined to point out a character that could only be likened to some tall precipitous island beetling in the midst of an illimitable sea, crowned with the most exquisite verdure and sparkling with a profusion of the sweetest flowers and fruits, but descending on all sides to the sea with so abrupt and threatening a shore, that to approach it would be shipwreck, and to gain its Paradise next to an impossibility.

What parched and weary child of the ocean, exhausted by his burning voyage and famished by the scarcity of water, would sail by such a land of plenty without eagerly longing to gain its refreshing shores?

But what prudent traverser of the seas would risk the whole safety of his voyage by the effort to gain so tempting, yet so dangerous, a place of refreshment and repose?

Charles also would have admitted the likeness of the simile, but have drawn a very different conclusion, by replying that Heaven could never have placed anything half so beautiful before the eyes of man, without at the

same time forming some avenue of access to its enjoyment. The greater the peril, the greater the delight! Better to perish in the effort for success, than entertain the desire of succeeding without courage to make the attempt.

This, at least, was the true chivalrous feeling; and if it does not always meet the happiness for which it sighs, it is generally accompanied by the best hopes of the good. It is a feeling which may have made some rash adventurers, but has given to the world all its heroes.

This, however, is certain, it was not the Lady Siberia who clung to our hero's side on the night in question; and while the embayed pair were walking up and down the short stretch of sand which the tyrant ocean permitted to them, discussing what would be the probable amount of blame they should each incur from their respective superiors, a bright flash shot forth from the deep gloom where a neighbouring cliff impended over the sea—the sharp whizzing of a bullet was heard through the air —something struck the beach at Charles's feet,

and very nearly blinded both himself and sister by the quantity of gravel and shells it threw up. Charles had lived long enough on the sea shore to know that the present was a still greater danger than any hitherto presented by the rising tide. Making his sister immediately crouch down in the furthest corner of the cave behind, and taking up as sheltered a position as he himself could find, he directed his voice towards the quarter from whence the shot had come, and demanded, "Who went there?"

For a few seconds the most perfect silence reigned in reply; and our hero, already excited by the events of the evening, and the tales of blood and violence he had been hearing, began to imagine some horrible violence was at hand. What could it be? It was impossible to doubt, that a bullet had been fired at himself and sister; it was equally impossible to ascribe any cause for such an attack. Equal anxiety reigned in the bosom of Anna; but each fearing to augment the sufferings of the other, both forbore to interrupt the silence of the night: save only by the quick beating of

their hearts, which, amid the reverberating walls of the little cavern where they had taken refuge, became a sound most clearly and painfully perceptible. The sufferings of the brother were also painfully increased, by his reflecting that it was by his carelessness his sister was exposed to the unknown dangers which now threatened them. These feelings were, however, doomed to be of no very long duration; for in a few minutes the sound of oars became distinctly perceptible, and a long dark boat shot swiftly forth from the deep shadow of the distant promontory.

It was pulled by eight men, and at the second glance all Charles's fears were dispelled by his recognizing one of the preventive boats.

Anger now succeeded every other feeling, and our hero determined on a very sharp remonstrance with the commanding officer, for having fired on two of Her Majesty's peaceable subjects.

With this intent, as the boat neared the shore, he advanced to meet it, and was surprised to hear himself saluted at a considerable distance with a volley of oaths, accompanied

by the not very civil demand of—"Why the devil, you young fool, could you not have answered before, when you heard us hailing for half an hour, instead of running the risk of having a ball put through your jacket?"

"Go to the devil," replied our hero, not a little tartly, on being thus saluted, "how was I to hear you whispering with the wind in your teeth? do you carry your grandmother's lungs to sea, that you can't make yourself heard at this short distance?"

"Come, my young shaver, none of your impudence; or else you will catch a blessed good thrashing before you are many minutes older."

"And you will get a disrating for your pains, you sea bullies; who authorized you, I should like to know, to use ball at the first fire? your musket was sure to be heard, if you could not be. Is a man's life to be risked in this way, because it suits your pleasure?"

"Avast rowing there, lay on your oars; let's have a look what sort of a bantam cock this is crowing in the face of nine men big enough to eat him."

"And cowardly enough to threaten him," interrupted Charles, whose blood was very far from having subsided.

"I'll tell you what it is, you young piawau wau-wau-hawberk, such a miserable skinny young thief is not worth a good thrashing; you are here caught by the tide, we see how it is with you, and so here we'll just let you remain, and see how you like it! Back your oars, there."

Immediately on the word of command being given, the suspended blades fell into the water, the helm was put down, and the boat's head was already flying round. In ten minutes more our hero would, by the possession of too much temper, have risked the only chance that presented itself of regaining the village, without that loss of time which would, he well knew, be the principal point of blame raised against his sister.

Vexed as he felt at the unexpected turn affairs had taken, still his pride would not allow him to ask them to take him on board; and in those few seconds of self-reproach for having sacrificed his sister's comfort by his

own impetuosity, he certainly learnt a lesson which lasted him through life: neither was it very dearly purchased. Anna had been anxiously listening from her hiding place; and hearing that affairs were not going on most smoothly, though she had not been able to detect what was the exact cause of difference, now came down towards the boat, with a view of preventing with her presence any further quarrelling. She certainly just made her appearance in time. No sooner was her dress caught sight of, than one of the seamen bawled out to his companion at the helm,

"Stop, Jem; there is a woman in the case. Did not I tell you there was, bless the pretty dears; could not I tell them at fifty miles off? Don't leave her behind, whatever you do with Master Saucebox."

"Shiver my timbers," said the coxswain, "if it is not little Anna. Come, we will land and see who the sweetheart is that has got such a pretty girl in tow; I always said that she must smile on somebody, though the little minx looked so prim and demure that a fellow

could not get a word out of her! She shan't hear the last of this in a hurry, she may take her davy of that: bear a hand, and pull the bow round, Jack, young Saucebox there is trying to persuade her not to come."

In a few seconds the boat's bows ran upon the shore, and three or four of the crew jumping out, immediately surrounded our two friends.

"Why it is only her brother, Jem, after all!" cried one of the seamen to the coxswain, as if in a tone of disappointment.

"No more it is," replied the worthy Jem. "Well, I am glad of it, for the girl's sake. I say, my young cobbler," added the coxswain, addressing Charles, "you have a nice pluck and spirit of your own, havn't you; to bully an old customer as you have been doing me, because we happened to drop a ball within half a mile of you."

"Within half a yard you mean, Master Prescott, though I did not know it was you when I spoke to you afloat just now; and if you will begin swearing at a landsman who is

not accustomed to that sort of thing, you must take what chance answer you happen to stumble on. But, however, it is no use to have any words upon the subject; the truth is, myself and sister have been taking a stroll here, and have been caught by the tide; just give us a lift round to the beach, will you?"

"Why I don't know whether you deserve it; but at any rate your sister does. And I am very glad, my little dear," addressing her, "that we happened to be passing this way, to give you a lift; the nights set in very cold now about twelve o'clock; and even if you had kept your feet dry, you would have found it hard work to have remained warm till the tide went down. Here, wait a minute, don't spoil your shoes in the salt water; we will shove the boat's head round to that little rock, and then you may get on board as dry as a red herring."

With this elegant simile for a lady fair, the coxswain ordered the boat's position to be shifted to an adjoining point, where Anna and her brother, having stepped on board without fur-

ther inconvenience, the seamen proceeded to row them round towards the beach they had somewhat rashly quitted. Scarcely had our hero taken his seat, when the thought occurred to him that he had now an opportunity of obtaining the very best information relative to the navy, which he was so desirous to gain.

He therefore at once led the conversation to the point in question, and found to his delight that the coxswain himself was an old man-of-war's-man, thoroughly acquainted with all the regulations of the service, and perfectly master of those details so necessary for his guidance. In the course of ten minutes he had learnt more on the matters on which he desired to be informed, than the whole stock of Abel Morris's books would have imparted to him in the course of a twelvemonth's reading; and though he now discovered that instances were comparatively few in which seamen had entered before the mast, and risen to the degree of Post-captain, yet it was sufficient to his ardent temperament to know that the thing had been done, and was still possible to be done again,

in order to feel quite convinced that he was destined to be one of the lucky few in whose favour the exception was again to arise.

If his previous resolves had wanted any further confirmation, the discussion of that evening would have given it most fully. With his usual quickness, he had ascertained that the fleet was now lying at a short distance from Dawlish, in Torbay, namely, and that the only step necessary to ensure to a volunteer his reception on board was the mere fact of his presenting himself, so that by the time our hero once more stood on the beach of Dawlish he was morally convinced that he was already a Post-captain in the royal navy, one whose commission had not yet been made out, it is true, but who was equally certain of gaining it for all that. Alas! how little did he know what scenes were to be undergone before even the slightest probability could present itself of realizing his day dream.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE these thoughts were swelling in the soul of the ambitious lover, with an engrossing intensity that excluded every other consideration, Anna also, on landing, found cause for congratulation. Though she had forborne to increase her brother's annoyances by dwelling on the fact; still knowing the temper in which she had left the worthy matron of her home, it was not without considerable apprehension that she found herself about to demand admittance at so late an hour, for it was now nearly midnight.

All fear, however, on this head was instantly dispelled on gaining the shore, by the occurrence of an event which still forms part of the legendary lore of Dawlish.

The shoal of herrings, to ensnare which the seine was about to be drawn, when our friends set off on their literary ramble, had proved enormous, beyond all recollection or precedent. Net after net had been used again and again, until not one available mesh was left unemployed in the whole village, nor a single one employed that had not been amply repaid by the prey procured, until, on the return of our party, the whole beach seemed perfectly alive with glittering heaps of the beautiful and delicious but unfortunate fish, which not only seems to possess no friends, but which nature appears expressly to have created for the food of almost every other larger animal, from the grampus that swallows them by the thousand, to the cat that mumbles its solitary bone.

Roused by the intelligence, the whole population of the place had flocked to the shore; and in the general pleasure and excitement, every other thought was lost. So far, therefore, from Anna having to go home and implore peace for staying out thus late, almost the first person she encountered on the beach was the

venerable matron herself, with the whole brood of her young fry, expressing, very audibly, her delight at the singular scene.

Like a prudent girl, the pretty orphan gave her brother a parting kiss, and slipped quietly into her place, without either apology or notice.

Charles, secure that he left her well protected, now departed to muse in solitude over those plans which had become the leading object of his existence: the busy scene of universal mirth possessed for him no charm, he could neither enter into their hopes, nor participate their joy, and though loving, as he did, all that was beautiful, he could not refrain from giving a single glance at the singularly exquisite landscape before him. It was but a glance after all, and turning away towards a more solitary part of the beach, his departing steps were suddenly arrested by beholding near him two figures that shut out every other object of attention; their backs were turned towards him, but he seemed almost intuitively to recognize their identity, and stood as if spell-bound

in the very act to move from the spot where they first met his eye.

As there were, perhaps, but two beings in the creation the sight of whom would have produced this feeling, it is scarcely necessary to say that they were Sir George Auberville and the Lady Siberia, who, attracted by the fineness of the night, and the extraordinary reports that had reached them of the fishing, had, like the rest of Dawlish, come down to the sea side to judge for themselves.

There had been only one point of deep regret that afflicted our hero in his contemplated plan of going to sea, this was, namely, the possibility that he might have to depart without again beholding that bright divinity for whom he undertook so perilous a pilgrimage; and if either in the battle or the gale, or the pestilence of some unhealthy clime it should be his lot to perish—no unlikely matter—he might never again feast his longing vision on the perfection of that being in whose worship he was to fall; when therefore he beheld her

standing before him, he regarded her sudden appearance as an omen of the brightest and dearest kind. The very one for which he should have implored Fate most ardently. The boon of all others most to be craved.

What a new appearance her presence seemed to give to the whole scene around! The rays of the moon acquired a fresh brilliancy, the heavens themselves a greater beauty in his eyes, the laugh and song around no longer jarred upon his melancholy spirit, but seemed to wake a sympathetic chord within his breast, which had too long been silent! The very air he breathed came to him with a thousand-fold more fragrance, when passing over the delicate frame that had excited such a madness in his mind.

Alas for mortals!—and can their love be designated by any truer name?—when with this wild and passionate delirium we worship the fragile flowers of a day!

In the exulting consciousness that the angel of his destiny stood before him, every other thought was lost! Whether it was night or day,

whether he stood amid the wilds of Arabia, or on the shores of the Caspian, or near his own humble village, whether a solitary admirer of the bright star that he adored, or surrounded by uncounted crouds, he nothing recked !—she was before him, his strained and delighted vision was filled with the exquisite perfection of her form, his ear was filled with the liquid melody of her voice, his frame trembled beneath the excess of that agitating transport so much beyond the power of any language to describe, so peculiarly in the power of love to inflict !

The brilliant moon, the tranquil waters teeming with life, the beach crowded with innumerable spectators, the myriads of fish sparkling in the purple and gold, that so lately adorned their scaly panoply amid the waves, the houses, coming out so brightly in the moon's rays, and the deep sombre cliffs beyond them, that shut in the whole picture, as with a frame ; all these were scarcely present to the perception of Charles, and only formed an unregarded item in the thrill of extacy, with

which every limb seemed to tremble, as he mechanically followed the steps of the Lady Siberia, and Sir George.

Ah me! how would he have been startled, if, in the midst of all this rapturous devotion, melancholy experience in the guise of some venerable friend, had laid a finger on his shoulder with this remembrance and admonition: "Poor child of care! while it is yet permitted to you, enjoy to the utmost the intoxication of this hour! a few brief years and Time's relentless finger will sweep from the scene every living being whom you now see disporting around you! even as the painter at the close of day effaces from his palette the whole assemblage of those brilliant colours, with which he has so lately given life to the canvas!"

Yet is there less philosophy in this melancholy reflection than may at first appear! Such thoughts for ever present to our minds, who would be troubled to leave behind a single memento of our ephemeral existence? And if the consciousness of our brevity is not

to interfere with the execution of our duties, it would indeed be foolish to allow of its murdering our pleasure! Thus far the reflection is certainly most useful, when grief assails the heart, and our hopes of happiness are blighted, it may well become the mourner to reflect for how brief a space the brightest joys may endure!

Little heeding any such thoughts as these, Charles naturally and wisely gave himself up to the full fever of his passion; careful however of giving offence, he took especial care to keep at such a distance from Sir George, that he might not seem to be, as he really was, dodging his footsteps, while at every moment that the Lady Siberia paused to speak to some fresh acquaintance, a pang of mingled grief and humiliation shot through his bosom, to think that he was born so far below her, as to be utterly excluded beyond the pale of such an honour, and as each gay coxcomb paid her those compliments which her beauty and station so well entitled her to receive, his heart seemed almost bursting with the envy that involuntarily rose within

it. This, however, greatly consoled him that nothing could be more perfectly contemptuous than the way in which these offerings on the shrine of her charms were acknowledged by the lady in question, who rarely seemed conscious even of their utterance, and not unfrequently repaid them by some most ungrateful reply.

After wandering on the beach for some minutes, Sir George proposed to his fair niece to take a seat on one of the numerous old boats that lay upon the shore. Having complied with this proposition, Charles stole round into a position from whence, unseen himself, he could gaze in silence and rapture on those faultless features now illuminated with the whole power of the moon's rays. To the coldest heart beauty seen at such a moment is about the most dangerous subject for contemplation that can reach the gaze of man; but to one, feeling as strongly as did our hero, the result may easily be imagined. Never even in his dearest dreams had Lady Siberia appeared to him more entrancing. "No wonder!" muttered he

"that she treats with such scorn all her worshippers! alas, who is worthy of her? Is it possible she can ever behold the reflection of such a face, and not view with anger the presumption that can expect to excite any interest in such a bosom?"

In the course of half an hour the shoal of fish began once more to quit the shore, and the sailors desisting from their labours, every one had the curiosity to examine what quantity had actually been secured. Scarcely could the beholders credit the evidence of their eye-sight! For nearly a quarter of a mile the sea beach was literally heaped with the glittering spoil, until the quantity taken had so depreciated its value, that the night's labour was regarded rather as a matter of curiosity than emolument, except as far as related to the absolute poor, to whom this bounty of heaven came as the most direct blessing.

Sir George now proposed that they should take one final walk along the beach, and then return home; and Lady Siberia, complaining that her shawl was rather too heavy for the

warmth of the evening, Sir George took it from her shoulders, with the intention of giving it to the servant.

But the latter, moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil, had preferred his amusements to his duty, and was missing. Sir George bestowed a few complimentary epithets upon the absentee, and then looked round for some temporary recruit to supply his place.

In an instant Charles sprang forward, and extending his arms, thus silently implored the honour of the burden.

"Oh! is it you, Master Cobbler?" said the Baronet, not intending to hurt his feelings; and committing the shawl to his charge, with an injunction, slightly unnecessary, "to be careful of it."

Little did the gallant Baronet know how deeply he had thrust the iron into the soul of one who revered him most devotedly. The idea of being called by his villanous low trade! and in the very hearing of her from whose mind, of all others, he was most anxious to

keep away every remembrance of the low estate from which he must rise, before he could ever hope to win a smile from her! Coming too from one he esteemed so ardently as Sir George, the arrow seemed still more deep, bitter, and envenomed. His thoughts upon this subject were, however, happily interrupted by seeing the gallant Baronet turn to his niece and whisper something in her ear, as he thought, with a laugh. This fact, at least, he distinctly saw!—The Lady Siberia glanced round at himself, as he followed behind, with a peculiar look that was long remembered.

Sensitively alive as he was to ridicule on this subject, he watched the expression of her countenance with nervous jealousy, almost expecting to see upon her lips the laughter he had heard from Sir George. So far from this, however, being the case, he saw, yet doubted, much as he wished to believe it, that on her sweet but melancholy features something still more grave and se' — something that amounted even to a look of pity, was distinguishable and dared he credit the tumult

of his heart, that seemed to bear witness to the fact,—the colour on that pale and most transparent cheek had deepened to a roseate tint, that not even the silvery rays of the moon could blanch!

Evidently, then, Sir George had told her who he was. Could it be possible!—for so Charles concluded from her manner—that Sir George had mentioned to his niece the presumption of which he had been accused! and as he well knew, too truly! No! certainly he could not have breathed this to her, or her looks would have annihilated him on the spot! Haughty as he knew her disposition to be, surely the presumption of having allowed his affection to wander towards her, would be enough, in her eyes, to doom him to a sentence of contempt for ever! Even if her contempt were capable of expiating such a crime, what woman could forgive presumption so unlimited? No, he was certain Sir George had not ventured to mention this: but still he had before him the fact, that his name had been mentioned to her, and that she had thought

him worthy the honour of her notice. Slight as this might be to ordinary mortals, to him it was ample to suffice for the happiness of years!

In all probability, Sir George had told her of the ill treatment from which the Baronet had rescued him, and her look of compassion was owing to that story; a part of that general feeling of sympathy which her noble sex are ever ready to bestow on all who present the claim of misfortune to their notice! Transported with a vague and distant hope, to which this look gave rise—so faint indeed, that even its possessor dared not acknowledge its existence—Charles, with the fond enthusiasm of a lover, folded his mistress's mantle to his breast; and as he thought that this might be the last time he should ever have an opportunity of appropriating to himself anything that had once graced her person, honesty almost wavered beneath the temptation, and the opportunity suggested a lover's theft of the whole robe. But though the fact of the Lady Siberia being its owner, was a most unanswer-

able protection for any of her property in his hands, Charles nevertheless thought there could be no harm in securing a slight fragment of that silken texture that had so often enclosed the fairy shoulders of his goddess; certainly he might venture to take a few slight fibres of the fringe to carry to sea with him as a species of talisman, far more potent, Charles was convinced, than myriads of the common vulgarity of a child's caul.

Keeping a sharp eye on the Baronet, our hero rapidly searched his pocket for that domestic weapon called a knife; but though he had carried such an instrument for the last three years of his life unceasingly, it was of course as a matter of usual ill-luck, wanting at the most critical moment during which he had ever had occasion for its use! Again and again he felt over all his pouches, but the lamentable fact was beyond contradiction—no knife was to be had. Charles looked round for a friend, but of these he possessed so few that no wonder none appeared.

In this dilemma, what was to be done?

Such an opportunity might never again occur; and as a last alternative, though we regret that the dignity of our narrative should be disturbed by its truthfulness imposing upon us the duty of recording this fact,—the ill-fated lover was compelled to have recourse to his teeth, and thus actually nibbled off a slight portion of the long silk at various intervals around the edges of the shawl, so that the spoliation could never be detected; and treasuring up the results in the true devotee fashion, which our forefathers followed with the bones of martyrs, he placed the whole very carefully away, as a source of happiness and delightful remembrance through days of absence and sorrow not far distant.

The gallant Baronet now directed his steps homeward, and as Lady Siberia had not yet demanded our hero's charge from him, he of course followed in her steps, expecting that the utmost stretch of Fortune's grace might extend to his accompanying her to her uncle's gates. Here, however, when prepared to take his leave and surrender up his pleasing burden to the servant, Lady Siberia told him to come

to the house and take a glass of wine for his trouble. Charles hardly knew whether this was reality, or one of the kind cheats which sleep puts upon our desires; more especially when he found himself unable to give utterance to his thanks in any words more distinct than the most respectful sigh.

On entering the grounds, Lady Siberia proposed to Sir George that, before entering for the night, they should walk round to the lawn in front that overhung the sea, and there mark the appearance of the scene they had just quitted, from that commanding height.

The veteran having consented, and neither party having bestowed any instructions on our hero as to whether or not he was to follow, he adopted the wise plan of pleasing himself, and did so.

CHAPTER XXII.

Small as the grounds of Cliffville undoubtedly were, they certainly displayed the most exquisite taste in their disposition. We have already said that the house was of the gothic order, and from the sea front extended a closely shaven lawn, having in its centre a small but elegantly shaped piece of water, teeming with gold and silver fish, and throwing up from its centre a small but brilliant fountain.

Around this lawn were arranged rows of orange trees, which the genial season permitted to be taken from the conservatory, while beautiful specimens of that gem of the forest, the magnolia, were planted at various intervals of the smooth turf. A shrubbery of most superb holly surrounded the garden, and formed a boundary for the eye, while on every

hand, beds of the sweetest flowers proffered their fragrance to the breeze, and their beauty to the eye.

In the latter offering, they were also joined by one or two exquisite statues of fawns and naiads, the white marble of which gleaming forth in the calm clear moonlight, gave an air of elegance and repose to the garden, and while it peopled the spot with types and images of the truest beauty, afforded also to the vision a series of cool delicious objects on which to repose and experience sensations of the most exquisite refreshment and delight.

Who that has ever walked on such a spot, at such an hour, with one to whom the heart has given its allegiance, can forget the slightest incident, the least important accessary to such transport? Nay more, who that have ever enjoyed such extacy, and subsequently endured the misery of losing the beloved one that gave the paradise its charm, can even in thought recall these scenes of vanished joy, without beholding them in the mind's eye, still peopled with the once enamouring shades?

While such are the effects on minds accustomed to the refinements of education, and the luxuries of wealth, it may readily be imagined with what potency the spell of such association acted on the mind of Charles.

As he followed at a humble distance, rejoicing in the good fortune that permitted him, before starting on his romantic and perilous undertaking, this glimpse of the sacred haunts and elegant privacies of his bright star, the witchery of the hour, the various beauties of the spot, the delicious perfumes that intoxicated the sense with every faintest motion of the breeze, the gleaming of the statues, the thousand brilliant colours of the parterres of flowers, the distant hum of the multitude on the sea shore, the hushed and gentle falling of the waves soothing the mind with an indolent feeling of repose, and more than all the divine form of the Lady Siberia herself, by far the fairest adjunct to all the witcheries of the spot, combined to excite in the mind of our hero, feelings of bliss, which till then, he could not have believed life capable of affording.

It is not at those moments, when we have taken the greatest pains to procure Happiness, that the delicious feeling is to be most fully achieved: Capricious deity, she, like others of her sex, too often frowns on those who dedicate their lives to her service, and delights with her presence those who are least expectant of the honour.

Thus it was in the present instance! How little, Charles imagined, when about to retire from the rejoicing throng, as one from whom all happiness was shut out, that such moments of rapture were so near him.

After gazing for some minutes on the beautiful and busy prospect so far away below them; the glistening sea, the crowded beach, the shining piles of fish, the heavily shadowed cliffs, and the deep azure dome of Heaven, without a single speck to cloud its glory, Sir George and his niece returned to the house by another path, and walking through one of the long windows which they found open, Charles, from a distance, beheld spread out the evening's refreshments, the table glittering with a load

of costly crystal and silver, and every profusion of viands and wine.

Vividly as this contrasted with his own mean and insufficient fare, it awoke not one sigh of regret in our hero's bosom, so thoroughly thankful did he feel towards Fortune for that quiet enjoyment of the night which had already fallen to his share.

As Charles remained at a respectful distance, looking on, he heard Sir George's hearty voice hail him from within, "Halloa there, come in here, my boy!" Charles approached the window, and beheld the Lady Siberia pouring out a glass of wine, and Sir George inflicting summary vengeance on a magnificent sirloin of beef.

Our hero's feet almost refused to support him, when he saw the former, to his indescribable astonishment, take the glass of wine from the table, and bear it towards him evidently for his use.

"I will now release you from my shawl, with many thanks," said the beauty, as she approached Charles, with a smile, so gentle, so

winning and yet so melancholy withal, that no human being could have witnessed it, and yet believed that the least tincture of pride lurked in the character of the speaker. "Don't be afraid to come inside the window," she continued, in the same exquisitely melodious tone, "I am sure the carpet is much too ancient to be in any risk of damage."

Charles, on this invitation, hesitatingly advanced to meet that being, at the bare mention of whose name, even his whole frame had been accustomed for weeks past to be electrified. Imagination only can paint what he endured between extacy and pain, when this most fair creature, towards whom he scarcely dared raise even his thoughts, now waited on him and ministered to his enjoyment.

Ah! if it were doomed by his sad destiny that he was never to be successful in his fond but devoted struggle for her sake, this would be the point at which he should desire to die.

As she proffered to him the wine with her right hand, she received her shawl with the

other, and in so doing generously slipped into his unsuspecting palm a small piece of gold. What was the cause of that convulsive start? Was it that he never expected money as a gift from her, or was he angry, at her thinking so basely of him as that he should expect it? Neither! All other considerations were swallowed up in one intense sensation. In bestowing upon him the mark of her benevolence, her soft and delicate fingers came in contact with his hand; it was but a touch—the slightest, the most momentary that could well be imagined. But the electric battery requires no more to pour forth the intense fire that consumes the purest metal. Never did galvanic shock travel more rapidly, or with more decided violence throughout the human frame, than did that simple touch, from her he so adored, thrill through the heart, enslaved by the mysterious influence of her eyes. It would be a curious point to know, whether any portion of the same feeling was experienced by the Lady Siberia! for our part, we have a distinct theory that human beings are so many electrical

machines brought to a state of the highest perfection, but still electrical machines after all, and as such, subject to be acted upon to a great degree, independent of the wills which generally govern our actions.

As no one was sufficiently near to declare to the exact colour of the lady's cheek at this moment, and as she certainly kept her own counsel upon the occasion, our curiosity on this point cannot be gratified.

That some motive or influence, be it what it might, induced Lady Siberia to dart away towards the sideboard, the moment after she had received her shawl, is, however, most true; it might have been to avoid our hero's thanks, it might have been, but it is really so very difficult to assign motives to noble ladies, or indeed any other ladies, that we must beg to give up the effort in despair, and content ourselves with the fact; while Charles, who certainly was in danger of losing his senses altogether, was recalled by Sir George addressing him in his good humoured way, with "Come, youngster, it's your messes turn at the tub, so bear a hand, and let me give

you this fid of bread and beef, or that wine will be making you top heavy."

Suiting the action to the word, Sir George cut from the sirloin, a huge slice of the monarch of the pastures, and accompanying this with a proportionate quantity of that preparation which mankind are accustomed to form from the poor man's true lily of the valley, the gallant Baronet sprinkled some salt over the whole with his own hand, concluding with the advice, "There, *my* boy, shoulder your sandwich, and now go and turn in."

Charles had some degree of reluctance to be guilty of the gross vulgarity of attacking this huge combination of edibles in the presence of the etherial Egeria of the spot, but on stealing a glance round the room, he found the Lady Siberia had already left it; doing therefore as he was bid, he made his obeisance to the Baronet, and then withdrew.

As to the delight which filled his bosom, that no language can adequately describe, and therefore we abandon such a vain attempt.

Suffice it to say, that on gaining the outside

of the lodge, he found himself more than ever resolved to proceed in his seaward determination, and with still greater, we will not say hopes, for his feelings did not amount to hope, but rather presentiment, that his sacrifices would not be made in vain.

Had our hero been cursed with the ordinary share of vanity, he might have drawn very different conclusions from the treatment exhibited to him both by uncle and niece, but in this lay his only chance of success, none could more meekly have interpreted the kindnesses he had received, and therefore he was in no danger of ruining himself by taking a presumptuous advantage of them.

He thought them great, as indeed they were, he knew them to be unexpected and extraordinary, but he had no means of knowing that they might in any great degree, if not altogether, be owing to any interest which Lady Siberia might feel in her future protége, his sister orphan.

As, however, his vanity did not mislead him,

it was better that he should proceed to sea in ignorance of the fact, and he had now resolved that his departure should not be delayed beyond a day or two at the furthest.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It may be supposed that with the adverse world before him, through which to fight his way, Charles' first act would have been to take advantage of Lady Siberia's bounty, and provide himself with those few articles of comfort, so desirable to a man starting to sea.

Little can such reasoners estimate the workings of such a passion as that which consumed the lowly follower of trade. He would sooner have thought of coining his heart's blood for the vilest uses, than of parting with the only tangible gift of her, so sanctified in his remembrance; no, so far from this being the case, he rose long before the day had dawned, so that nobody might see his actions, and drilling a hole through the piece of gold he had received the night before, he knotted into a

small cord the silk he had managed to detach from her shawl, and with this, suspended her gift around his neck, vowing with all the chivalry of a true Paladin, to wear it nearest to his heart, to defend it in that position with his life, and never to let the emotion of fear find existence beneath it. To be the first in the road of glory, and the foremost in every danger, in short to cherish that piece of gold as a talisman, that should stimulate him in every virtue, and counsel him from every ill!

Taking one last farewell ramble, he returned in sufficient time to find the Tylers not yet risen, and to write a long explanatory letter to his sister. In this, after expressing deep regret at being obliged to inflict pain, he told her that he had very unfortunately given way to feelings of ambition, which made him unhappy in his present condition, and prompted him to seek in some other sphere a mode of elevating himself above it. After admitting that this might very possibly prove to be a mere mistaken notion of misdirected vanity, he lamented much his suffering under an impression that he was

destined for some higher position in the world than that of a mere mechanic; and that if, after giving his efforts a fair trial in the world, he should find that he had overrated his abilities, he would at once return to the humble station from which he now endeavoured to escape and drudge on unrepiningly; but that as his happiness was one of the chief things he had to consider in life, he trusted to be excused the charge of selfishness in making this one effort at seeking it in his own peculiar path.

He then proceeded to add, that he had received much kindness from Sir George Auberville and his niece the Lady Siberia, and therefore begged that she would take to the latter a small tribute of his respect in a specimen of his own manufacture, the last as he hoped that would ever proceed from his hand.

Finally, he assured her that he would be her constant correspondent on every occasion; and begged that she would endeavour to supply to his kind mistress, Mrs. Tyler, the loss which she would feel by his leaving her husband's service.

He then more particularly detailed the cruel treatment she had to suffer; and implored Anna, if she found an opportunity, to bring this fact under the notice of Sir George Auberville, who had already expressed every kind feeling in that quarter: in conclusion, he begged her to take the greatest care of her conduct, that her brother might always be able to acknowledge her with undiminished pride; while he, on his part, would fight hard to render himself still more worthy of her love, and, if Heaven permitted him, he trusted to return and claim her the sister of a Post-captain.

Although this singular document is still preserved in the family of its gallant writer, we have forborne giving it in its original and fair state, as many of its passages are so palpably the production of a person unskilled in composition, that it suffers little by translation.

Our hero having folded and wafered this last communication to his sister, he next addressed a few lines to Mrs. Tyler, thanking her most heartily for all her kindness, express-

ing his sorrow at the necessity of their separation, and his conviction that any loss she might so sustain would be fully made up to her by the kindness of Sir George Auberville, to whom he had recommended her through his sister. After giving her a promise of warm remembrance and every assistance in his power, he asked her to forward an enclosed parcel to Anna.

These matters despatched, he first prepared the material for the intended specimen of his handiwork for Lady Siberia; and then devoted himself to a long day's exertion as the last benefit he could bestow on the family of his kind benefactress. When the usual hour for leaving off work in the evening had arrived, instead of following the doctor's prescription in going out to take the air, he resumed his labour for his intended present till a late hour, and after supper once again proceeded till its completion.

Having produced a most faultless specimen of his lowly calling, and made it to correspond with the utmost nicety with that print of her

delicate little foot which, as the reader will remember, he had previously taken from the sand, he enclosed the whole to his sister, together with the last shilling he possessed in the world as the price of the material to Mrs. Tyler, and then making up into a bundle such parts of his wardrobe as he intended to take with him, completed the last blow on the lapstone as the clock struck midnight. All his other preparations being finished, he then stole forth from the humble shed that had so long given shelter to his misery, and flung himself upon the wide and buffetting world, to sink or swim, to conquer or to die.

Any one of a less romantic mind would have taken advantage of at least one more night's sound sleep; but, on the other hand, any one less romantic might never have found spirit sufficient to undertake such an enterprize at all. Be that as it may, such was not our hero's case; at the hour and in the manner we have described did he set forth, bending his steps towards Cliffville to take a last farewell.

He wandered round its walls for at least an

hour, watching unseen the various lights flitting to fro, that proclaimed the family not yet retired; at last every solitary taper was extinguished,—and now there came upon him a strong and irresistible desire to indulge his eyes with one last look at the room in which Lady Siberia slept; this it was impossible to behold, however, from the road,—and then arose the question, should he dare to scale the wall and intrude upon the sacred precincts of the beautiful garden, the recollection of which had through every occupation incessantly haunted his imagination from the very moment when he first trod within its odorous bowers. There could be no harm in such a step; and secure in the innocence of his intention, he felt that he might safely take this liberty; but yet it looked so like returning with ingratitude Sir George's kindness, that he knew not how to palliate the otherwise venial trespass.

"No," said he at last, after a long struggle, "let me begin as I hope to end, without wrong and without reproach. I undergo a great sacrifice in not bearing with me the remembrance

of having watched her window on the last night I may pass on shore for years,—for years?—Perhaps for ever! But at least I shall bear with me this consolation, that the unfailing remembrance I shall ever retain of the Paradise within, will be untainted by any alloy of its having been either clandestine or dishonourable." And steadily following up this resolution before he could have time to change it, he commenced his retreat towards the shore; still, however, keeping his eyes fixed on the house that contained his treasure, until it was hid by one of the turnings of the road.

Having gained the opposite side of the brook, he at once commenced his walk for Torquay; and arriving at Teignmouth, which was in his road, about half past two o'clock in the morning, he turned down to the beach and sought shelter in one of the boats. There, covering himself over with the sail which had been left to dry, he was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXIV.

How many hours Charles had slept he knew not, but he could perceive, by the light that had broken through his slight awning, that the sun had given him the start, and was already up before him; while, as he lay in his no very comfortable berth, he heard three or four deep bass voices discussing some matter in which they at any rate appeared to take deep interest.

Ignorant whether they might not be the owners of the boat he had converted to his own use so coolly, Charles endeavoured to ascertain this fact from their lips, and then discovering that their topic of conversation was one of general and public interest, he had no scruple in continuing to be an unseen partaker of their conversation.

"Well," continued one of the speakers, "whether they meet the French just yet or no, this one thing I will maintain, that the fleet's in as fine a condition now as ever it was since England had a navy; and if you doubt the truth of what I am saying, just go and take a squint at them as they lie in Torbay at this very time, Tom."

"Oh! they are lying at Torbay still, are they?" said the other speaker.

"Aye," resumed the former, "and an uncommonly fine show they make, though they won't be there long, I am told; still, it is worth any one's while to go over and have a squint at them, as they go on with their watering, which is very nearly finished now.—There's some as brave officers in that fleet as ever we've had, since old Benbow's time."

"Aye, my boy, and if all accounts are true, some just as rummy ones: there is a chap they call Sir Henry Coxcomb, there; I hear he leads his officers such a devil of a life, that to be with Old Nick would sometimes be quite a pastime and delight."

"Why, I believe he does give the officers a bit of a twist occasionally, though, mind you, he's not so much disliked by the men; but if he does catch you tripping, there is a flogging for you and no light one, without any further bones about it. Sunday or week day, it is all the same to him: he thinks nothing of piping down from prayers and piping up to punishment."

"Aye, I have heard he is a queer, odd tempered devil; a sort of fellow I should not much care to sail with."

"Why, as to sailing with him, give the devil his due; there is a word or two may be said about that, more than you would suppose at first."

"Why, what the devil can you say for a sort of fellow who has the character that he bears in the service?"

"Why, not much, I admit, as far as the officers go; but with regard to the men, I am told that he keeps his ship in a very smart, efficient state for service, and that if any of his seamen do distinguish themselves, he does not

forget it; and his interest is very good with the Admiralty,—one of the Lords married his grandmother, or some humbug of that kind: but then again, if the cat is not spared at all, and all hands are kept sharp to their stuff, I must say that if either man or officer wishes to learn the profession, why such a ship as that is the best ship to do it in."

"Aye, but do you mean to tell me that all that sort of thing may not be done in a quiet way by an officer who is a gentleman, as well as by rough and blustering bullies, who can never open their mouth but they have an oath in it, nor ever put a seaman straight for any error he may have committed, without brutalizing the chap's mind by cutting his back open at the gangway?"

"Why, to be sure, I admit all you say: the thing not only can be done, but has been done; only here, you see, is the difference,—any man may get a ship into smart discipline by the common bully-rag-flogging-system of Captain Coxcomb, but it takes a real, clever gentleman to do it in the quiet way you mention; such a man

as you don't meet with in a thousand, though I admit, when you do, his men are ready to follow him to the devil, if he likes; and discipline once got up in that fashion, never falls slack again. Whereas, by what you call the bullying system, a man is just as likely to have a mutiny in his ship as not; and then, as none of the junior officers have much power, if once the men take the law in their own hands, it is all up with such a skipper."

"Aye, and very rightly too; and though you may think what you like of such a fellow as that, for my part, nothing should ever induce me to trust myself at sea with such a man. It may be all very well, as you say, for a young chap as wants to larn the service,—it may be a good school to be brought up in; but after one's edication is passed, it is not a very pleasant one to spend one's life in; and as long as there is any other ship in the fleet, why I would never trouble Captain Coxcomb."

"Oh! I don't believe he would be so bad as he is, if it was not for a precious bargain of a wife he has got; and because the other cap-

tains' wives won't visit her, for some beautiful piece of goodness she has been doing, I suppose, why she works up the captain, and the captain fires away at his officers and crew,—so its a precious mess altogether; and I hear she has sometimes gone so far as to walk out upon the quarter-deck, during punishment, and tell the skipper to give the poor devil at the grating another dozen, and many other tricks of the same kidney; so that no wonder you see he is a little wild at times."

"As to the wonder, I don't wonder at that. All I wonder at is, that the Admiralty should ever think so cheaply of men's lives and the service as to employ such a man, and that any other person should ever be such a fool as to sail under him; and if all men in the world were of my mind, Captain Coxcomb's precious ship, the 'Tartar,' would lie some time in commission before she could muster crew enough to take her out to sea."

To this remark some rejoinder was made, which Charles did not hear; and the parties, who had hitherto been leaning against the boat

in which he was lying, having moved away, he had no opportunity of hearing the rest of their conversation.

That which, however, he had heard, produced a deep effect on his mind as to the character given of Captain Coxcomb. There was much that excited his unqualified abhorrence and contempt; and, differently situated from what he now was, these would have been the only feelings produced.

On the other hand, with his present intentions, peculiar as they were, of rising in the service by unaided merit, the thought struck him whether Captain Coxcomb might not be the most likely person for him to sail with; both seamen seemed to admit that under such a commander, vitiated as his system was, every man would be compelled to learn his duty.

"Well, then," reasoned Charles, "is that my intention in going to sea? Most undoubtedly it is. Have I courage," he demanded, "to bear such a test as the discipline of this unfeeling fellow? I have sworn that my courage shall be equal to any trial that

may be made of it. It is possible I may be fortunate enough to attract this savage's attention by doing my duty to the letter; and his interest with the Admiralty would prove my surest stepping-stone to promotion. It seems with all his faults that he is a man of courage, and so the opportunity of distinguishing one's self will not be wanting; and whether I should gain his patronage or not, one thing is certain, I shall learn my duty thoroughly. If I can only manage to stay in his ship a twelvemonth, and procure from him a certificate of good conduct, not only shall I never have anything worse to fear in the shape of a tyrannical captain, but the very fact of my having been able to stand the trial of such a fellow, will be always proof positive to every other officer of my abilities as a seaman. Once for all, faint heart never won a fair lady. So Captain Coxcomb is my first captain, and the 'Tartar' my first ship."

Having said thus, our hero arose from the wretched apology for a couch which he had used during the night, and resumed his march towards Torquay.

CHAPTER XXV.

THERE was something heroic and chivalrous in our hero's determination, to sail under Captain Coxcomb, but there was in it also something very rash; however, his youth will plead an excuse for the latter qualification, and the course of our story, will best display in what way his chivalry was met.

Unfortunately, however heroic a man may be, there is one unruly part of his system, which is terribly deficient in all those chivalrous feelings, to which we have been endeavouring to do faint justice. This portion of humanity cares not for lofty motives, high ambition, generous impulses, or even thoughts of love. One mutton chop to this degenerate culprit, is worth a whole flock of less solid

philosophy! Need we say, that we allude to that delicate portion of man, which Spinster aunts denominate the stomach?

Morn having far advanced, Charles now felt most terrifically hungry. He bravely tried to blink the question, to persuade himself that the morning air was fresh, and had temporarily made him a little keen.

But the aforesaid member was peremptory and—to use the phrase of a certain popular Birmingham candidate, than whom a better fellow never gave or honoured a hospitable spread,—"would stand no such immaculate nonsense," but roundly declared its intention of striking for wages, which intent Charles' heart was obliged to acknowledge, by certain premonitory hints, touching the likelihood of a fainting fit, if immediate sustenance was not administered.

Poor fellow! he felt his knees tottering beneath him, from sheer weakness, and reflected that he had not one single farthing in the world, to procure himself a morsel of food, except indeed the Lady Siberia's piece of gold,

rather than think of changing or parting with which, he would have died a million deaths, a million times.

Strange and inscrutable passion! thus does love in its wild extremes by turns assume the shape of something more than human virtue, or something worse than human crime!

Saddening and degrading resource, as Charles felt it to be, he had no alternative, but to beg some bread, or fall upon the road, several times did he make a vain effort to address some parties whom he met, with his sad petition, and each individual time his courage failed him, and he remained mute, thus he continued slowly wandering on, and scarcely knowing what course to adopt, when meeting with a spruce young gentleman, Charles preferred his plaint, and received in reply, an intimation that it would do him good to work for what he wanted. This reply appeared to Charles the more cruel, as it was quite evident the party uttering this advice, could only know what labour was, from witnessing the work of others.

Thus seriously discouraged, our unfortunate young friend sat down upon one of the benches in sight of the sea, and shed some bitter tears at the remembrance of those kind though humble friends whom he had left behind him. Once, despite himself, the question stole across his mind, of whether he should return, but instantly banishing the thought as one beyond all reason, he resolved to endure every suffering rather than waver in his purpose, and trusting every thing to Heaven to receive with fortitude whatever lot it might award him.

After a brief space of grieving, hope once more returned. Rising from his seat and staggering onwards, the thought suddenly struck him, that he had at least some clothes to part with, and fully resolved thus to meet the exigencies of the moment, his former feelings of despair vanished almost as rapidly as they had risen. As yet it was too early an hour to find any of the shops open, but while Charles was trudging his way to that quarter of the town where they lay, he passed a fisherman's hut, the door of

which stood open, and at the further end an aged damsel was bending her tottering form over the fire place, in preparation of that meal which had given our hero so much disquiet: beside the door stood a very pretty young woman, who seemed much exhausted by some exertion, and by her side a young seaman puffing and blowing at no ordinary rate; while between the two lay a huge sea chest, which they had evidently been carrying, but which the young woman was too weak to lift up the steps which led into the cottage.

"I say, my lad," said the sailor, saluting our hero, "I wish you would just give me a lift with this chest up those steps, my Betsy here has strained her wrist with carrying it already, I'll do as much for you another time, and give you a glass of grog into the bargain."

"I will help you with pleasure," was Charles' ready reply, "without any reward, and as for the glass of grog, I would much rather thank you for a basin of bread and milk, casting a wistful glance towards the preparation on the table."

"That you shall have, my hearty, willingly, replied the other, and a right good rasher of bacon to boot,—catch hold," and suiting the action to the word, he set Charles the example, which the latter most gladly followed, and in a few minutes, the sea chest, which might have been made of solid iron, to judge from its weight, was securely lodged in the bed-room of the young seaman. This was certainly a more pleasant way of gaining his food, than either from the cold charity of strangers, or the partition of his wardrobe, and accepting this good beginning as a favourable augury, Charles descended and commenced with infinite relish this first meal, which he could in perfect strictness be said to have earned unaided.

Hastening over his breakfast as rapidly as he could, without either asking or being asked any questions, full of hope and determination, he once more set out, anxious to gain Torbay, before there might be the least probability of the fleet having sailed.

At length an hour before noon, he beheld riding in the noble harbour in question, the

fleet he so anxiously sought. Such was his joy at the sight, he almost felt inclined like the Spaniard in history, on beholding the sea, to throw himself on his knees, and offer thanks to Heaven for the sight. For some minutes however, he remained standing in grateful silence, not the less piously employed, from the fact that his gratitude arose rather from the heart than the lips. After resting for a slight space from his labours, he once more resumed his route, now a very brief one, to the part he sought. As he descended the hill he met some two hundred yards further on, coming towards him, what appeared to be a very strange looking figure; it was that of a tall man, in a blue frock coat buttoned up to the chin, and wearing a black hat. His hair, that had once been dark as the raven's plume, was now almost one entire mass of grey, the countenance was hollow, sunk, and seam'd with the strongest lines of care; the eye was wild, wandering, and bloodshot; while the mouth was compressed so flat, that the projection of the lips, was almost entirely lost, except where the teeth had

fastened into the lower one, with so severe and agonized a gripe as to show wounds in several places, and to leave the ensanguined current partly starting, partly dried upon the under jaw.

In some of his numerous readings, Charles had somewhere stumbled upon the eastern superstition of the vampire, and never to his contemplation had he expected to behold any thing so like a human realization of that fabulous monster.

Seeing, however, a very handsome pair of gold seals hanging pendant from the aforesaid vampire's watch, Charles, who had no notion of being scared from any object, whatever it might be, boldly accosted the terrific-looking gentleman, and begged to know the hour.

The vampire, without one word in reply, or making the slightest motion toward the horologe in question, briefly made answer, in a sharp squeaking voice, that did not particularly conciliate our hero's respect.

"Eleven, fifteen, A.M." And then, without pausing for an instant, the said Vampire con-

tinued his walk, and left Charles to pursue his own.

This the latter did, but he had not proceeded far, when he heard the word "Stop!"

The same sharp disagreeable voice that he had noticed before, now informed him that it was quite unnecessary to question who the speaker might be, Charles felt certain that it could only be the Vampire; and turning round, he was confirmed in his belief, by seeing the latter standing still and looking towards him.

"Stop!" repeated Charles, "yes, I shall certainly stop if I like, but not for such a polite invitation as you have just given me."

"You won't, eh?" said the Vampire, "why, pray what are you?"

"What you ought to be,—a man."

"Rather a young one, by your mode of conducting yourself. Come to me, sir."

"Nay, as you desire the interview, you had better come here."

"Oh! very well," replied the other, with an appearance of nonchalance; "any thing to oblige a youth of your promise."

And now Charles, for the first time, perceived that the stranger bore in his hand a large Malacca cane, having on it a most superb gold head.

"Surely," muttered our hero to himself, "he is not going to try and give me a thrashing: weak as I am, I shall certainly go to the wall, but at any rate I'll hold him a pull for it, and if no other part of my qualifications can stand the test; at least I must have the best legs of the two. — Faint heart never won a fair lady, so here goes."

But, however valiantly Charles had made up his mind to the battle, it did not seem probable that his mettle would be put to the test, for the vampire suddenly halted, grounded his arms in the most majestic style, and began looking at our hero from top to toe, with the most sovereign contempt.

To Charles's proud spirit, this was perhaps more galling than a blow would have proved, and after enduring this speechless obloquy for some seconds, he broke silence by remarking with all the sarcasm that his want of practice permitted.

"It strikes me, most ingenious File, that if now you were to look at home, you would perceive something quite as queer, though a great deal less agreeable."

"Why did you ask me what the hour was?" in his turn demanded the Vampire, with the utmost coldness of manner, and as if he had never heard one particle of the other's impertinence.

"Because I wanted to know what o'clock it was."

"Where were you going?"

"To Torbay."

"What to do?"

"To join a man of war."

"Which one?" continued to demand this self-elected inquisitor.

"The Tartar," replied Charles.

"Why?"

"Because I hear every body else is afraid to sail with the Captain."

"Afraid! why afraid?"

"Why, that you had better ask his ship's company; they tell me the reason is, because he has become such a tyrant and fidget, from

people not choosing to visit his wife; but, as I don't care a straw for any man's fidgets, or his tyranny, and it's ten to one if he asks me to visit his wife, though I should be happy to condescend even to that, if he particularly wished it, why I intend to join him."

"What trade have you been?"

"What is that to you? If I had followed yours, you would have known it without asking, and if not, you can't want the information."

"Much obliged to you, young gentleman, for your civil information, I merely thought I could be useful to you."

"You may be that, if you like, I have no objection; so tell me, if you can, which is the best way to get on board the Tartar."

"You seem as anxious to catch a Tartar, as others are to get rid of one; are you still determined to sail under Sir Henry Coxcomb?"

"Quite. My object is to learn my duty in first rate style, and rise in the service by so doing: Sir Henry, I hear, is a man of interest, and if he chooses, can soon shove a smart hand

ahead at any rate, he is not quite so unpopular among the men, however he may act among the officers. I believe he is a great brute to them."

"Oh! that is part of your calculation, is it?" and the Vampire, for the first time, shewed something like a faint indication of a smile, as he continued.

"I hope you don't think it very likely that Sir Henry will take a fancy to you?"

"And why not, Mr. Scarecrow, I should like to know? you seem to have a peculiar notion of flattering the wishes of your neighbours."

"In the first place, my boy, your tongue is too large for your mouth, like an alderman's, you can't keep it in subjection."

"Oh! no, it is your ears are too large for your body, like a donkey's they can't command respect."

Here the stranger made a polite bow, and taking no further notice of the repartee having gone against him, continued.

"Besides your frame is not strong enough for the harsh duties of a man of war."

"Poverty, want of food, want of air, and over work, have made me so thin; the sea breezes and regular meals, will soon add carcase to the animal."

"And pray then, may I ask, since you are thus determined upon the matter, how long do you expect to be under the command of this tyrannical Captain Coxcomb, before he finds it necessary to flog you?"

"That never will be necessary; I go to do my duty, not to break it."

"But the Captain's opinion on that subject, may differ from your own, how would you act if you were to find yourself some bright morning tied up to the gangway, and receiving three dozen?"

"Why, if I thought I deserved it, I should submit to it."

"And pray what would you do, if you thought you did not deserve it?"

"Why, I should take the first convenient opportunity of being even with the Captain."

"And pray, most noble youth, how would you set to work about that?"

"The steps I should take should be such only as I could answer for to the Great Creator, who holds captain and cabin boy alike in his eye."

"A well principled young man, truly!"

"You may well say that, and such is the stern determination of one who never injured the meanest of God's created beings yet; nor if there was such a thing as justice to be had in the king's service, would I propound any other remedy of my own."

"What do you mean?"

"Why if justice in the Royal services, were not the most complete mockery, if I thought so gross a wrong had been done to me, as an unjust flogging, I would appeal to the interposition of the law, instead of taking it into my own hands."

"What do you mean by saying there is no such thing as justice to be had in the King's service, do you not know there is such a thing as a Court Martial?"

"Yes, I do know there is such a thing, and my cheek has burned as I have read the perjured partiality of the people miscalling themselves officers and men, who compose such courts. As for justice, I tell you again there is no such thing as the barest semblance of justice in either the Army or the Navy. Do you think that if there existed any thing approaching justice in either, that such a man as this Sir Henry Coxcomb would any longer command the Tartar, when his name is such a perfect reproach on every tongue?" His character for tyranny, and disgusting brutality, is indeed so notorious that not only is the service disgraced by it, and the authorities at the Admiralty rendered eternally infamous, by permitting him to retain command of his ship, but the whole law of the land undergoes a violation and reproach, when it is thus plainly proved that there is one law for the rich, and another for the poor; it is the influence of instances so flagrant as these, that not only breeds mutinies, and destroys navies, but spreads a spirit of discontent, and awakens

a train of cogent reasoning throughout the land, that has led ere now, to the revolution of the mightiest empires. Whenever the day shall arrive that the wealthy aristocracy of any country, shall allow the channels of justice, those safe outlets of popular wrongs, to get choked up, a torrent will burst from the mountains, carrying all before it! Let the people but once see that there is, as I have said before, one law for the rich, and another for the poor, and such folly and iniquity drives them to the dangerous remedy of stripping all of their property, and leaving rich and poor to begin the world again on equal terms. What could any aristocracy do, supposing two millions of men were to come to this determination? there is no question what they must do—they must either be slaughtered or submit! They might make a slight stand,—they might have a faint chance, if the Army or the Navy of their state, looked coldly on the cause of their fellow citizens the people, and remained faithful to the cause of their old masters the

once rich few ; but if these masters had, in the days of their prosperity, alienated the hearts of their troops,—if they had maintained in authority men unfit for command, — if they had allowed gross oppressors, soured tempers, and maddened spirits to goad men on to insubordination,—if they had screened the tyrant from punishment, and treated with the most cruel mockery of justice, the unfortunate culprits who had been driven into error,—if they had corruptly made court patronage and wealthy connections, the means of bolstering up all this iniquity and wrong, they would have shewn that justice was polluted in its very source, and that their government had been base enough, under pretext of keeping up discipline, to convert their soldiers or sailors, who ought to be among the freest and most honoured citizens of the State, into mere bonded slaves! Among such men then in its extremity, a corrupt government, instead of friends, would find at least indifferent spectators, or, perhaps, most dangerous enemies ; for suppose that in a political convulsion the Army

or the Navy of a state, or even the majority of them, were to head the people for the restitution of their inalienable birth-right, equitable distribution of justice in all departments of the state,—what would be the fate of the most powerful aristocracy that the world ever saw? —such as Venice for example. The fate of a field of thistles before a herd of swine; they might rear their heads most proudly with every gallant show and bearing, and surround themselves, it is true, with some sharp thorns, but in the briefest space they would be devoured, or trodden down by the hoofs of the multitude, and their bodies only serve to fertilize the clay whereon they lately flourished, and prepare the ground for yielding forth a healthier crop."

"Upon my word, for a boy, who appears scarcely to have any beard upon his chin, you seem as nice a nest-egg of mischief and rebellion, as designing persons could well sit upon! Is it a favourite recreation of your's, this preaching in the highways?"

"I preach, neither in highways nor byeways, nor ever did; you know nothing of your

own language, or are grossly fond of perverting it, to bring any such accusation against me. I am like the rest of my countrymen; treat me with even the smallest quantity of propriety, and there is not a more loyal, or a more easily ruled being to be found, but attempt no juggle upon my understanding, for it is as sharp as yours; neither make the dangerous effort of trying to rob me of honest labour, or justice, for these form the birthright bestowed upon me by Heaven, when it gave me the privilege of drawing my first breath in Great Britain. I like convulsions of the state, as little as any man; I know that like all other conflagrations they injure every party, and though some may rise for a time upon the ruins of the rest, yet, in the end, blood is poured out like water, all parties pass through an incredible sea of troubles and sufferings, the greatest atrocities are perpetrated, the most cruel wrongs endured, and all that society, after the lapse of a few years more or less, may subside into a similar state and form to that from which it has been so con-

vulsively broken up; with the energies of the country weakened, its resources exhausted, its mind depraved, and its commerce vanished. All this I know and feel, why, therefore, you say bring up the argument I have lately held? For this most useful purpose; to prove that those who are in authority, having obtained a certain degree of perfection, possess a stake much greater, with duties to keep up that perfection, infinitely more imperative, and the peril which menaces its sudden destruction infinitely increased; for men grow mad beneath the sense of injustice, so mad as even to prefer death itself! Even I, who know myself to be not altogether wanting in either prudence or cunning, admit that I could coolly retort upon my Captain, if he could unjustly inflict upon me a flogging—the most horrible degradation the brutality of man ever invented."

"Well, but what becomes of your boasted reason after all? of course you would be hung for your act."

"Under the articles of war I suppose I might, but if so, I should go to the yard-

arm with the utmost cheerfulness and resignation. Hanging under such circumstances is simply the price which men pay for certain actions, that is a mere arrangement of society, a sort of Shylock bargain and sale. The crime may be the greatest man can commit no doubt, or under the sanguinary articles of war one of the most natural of errors, since by those laws death seems awarded to everything alike, but the true essence of crime is in the eye of Heaven, not in the mere punishment of men. My belief may be peculiar, or may be erroneous, but I shall ever think that if one individual inflicts upon another the most grievous injury, and society refuses him redress, Heaven armed man with thought, and purpose, with limbs, and energy to right himself upon the criminal."

"Ahem! a precious cockatrice too, you are! Pray, who educated you?"

"The best of all masters, Nature — and myself."

"The best or the worst, as the case may be; but depend upon it, the day you enter the 'Tartar' you have taken the first step to the gallows."

"That may be, still I may manage to do what you never could."

"Ah! what is that?"

"Grace even a gibbet."

"You are resolved then, are you, to enter this man of war?"

"Perfectly."

"You look a poor sort of man-of-war's man, and much more like one going to faint."

"Like both most likely, seeing I have had no refreshment since six o'clock this morning, except a long walk in a broiling sun, so now, if you have finished with your thousand and one questions, perhaps, you will point out to me where I shall find one of the 'Tartar's' boats."

"Down yonder, in that creek, lies one, we see her from here; but I had much rather you should not go, and would seek some other employment."

"I dare say you would, but as it is no business of your's I shan't take your advice."

"You have some seeds of good in you," replied the other, without seeming to notice

Charles' petulance, "and if you could only get under some sensible person who would cure you of your silly notions of freedom, and your outrageous errors of justifiable violence, you might do well. Though, to be sure, you are but a boy yet, and having been allowed to follow your own notions, of course they have led you wrong; if you go on board the Tartar all these evils may be fanned into stronger existence. Take my advice, stay on shore until you have had a little more time for reflection."

"Thank you, I have had more reflection in my day, than ever your grey hairs have known, and perhaps sorrow too; though you must have had some frightful companion in your thoughts, to let age so mar your features, while youth is so visible in your figure."

A dark and unearthly scowl seemed to pass over the features of the stranger, as Charles ventured on this personal allusion. The long sharp white teeth, darted into the quivering nether lip, the attenuated fingers involuntarily clasped the gold handle of the

cane, and for a few seconds our hero was convinced, that the Vampire meditated giving him the long expected blow; by a strong exertion however, the paroxysm of agony, or rage, whichever it might have been, was mastered, and with the same faint attempt at a smile, the Vampire replied,

"Go then, since you will be so wilful, and take upon your own head whatever comes of it; at any rate before you go allow me to offer you any moderate odds in your favour you please, that before this day week you are as heartily flogged as any man can desire, and that you've neither kicked, cuffed, shot, stabbed, poisoned, nor cut the throat of your Captain, and what's more, that you have had neither opportunity nor pluck, to do either one or the other."

"I hope I am too honest to make any bet, which I am too poor to pay if I should lose, and there is no chance of my ever again seeing you to demand it if I should win."

"Oh! you think there is no chance of seeing me again, that is your reason is it?" said the stranger, "well, if that is the case, I can only

wish you good morning."—Here the Vampire turned away muttering, "If I don't," — and something further followed of which Charles could only catch the words "flog," and "two days older;" he thought however that a look of peculiar significance passed over the stranger's wild and haggard features, as he uttered the last sentence, about Charles not thinking that they should meet again; but our hero's mind was full of so many much more important matters, that though the circumstance did flash across his senses, it was only for an instant, and hearing seven bells strike from some part of the fleet, he hastened down to the landing place, fearful that he might be too late for the Tartar's boats, which he knew would have to go on board at 12 o'clock to be in time for dinner.

Making the best use of his legs, he arrived just as the last man was jumping in, and the bowman waiting to shove off. Hailing the boat to let them know that it was for them his speed was exerted, the officer who saw him running, delayed a few minutes, to allow

of his gaining the beach, and then hailed, saying,

"Do you want us?"

"Yes," bawled Charles.

"What the devil is in the wind now," said the midshipman. "Some message from the Captain, Sir," suggested one of the men.

"I don't see how that is probable," returned the midshipman, "however, I suppose we shall soon be let into the secret,"—and as Charles gained the edge of the boat, and made an effort to jump in without further ceremony, he was arrested by the salutation of,—

"Holloa, youngster, where the devil are you driving to?"

"I want to get on board the Tartar," exclaimed Charles,—very considerably out of breath, and scarcely able to articulate, while, as he made the assertion, he heard one or two of the men exclaim among themselves, "A precious fool for your pains, there is many a man who would be glad to exchange with you;" with other similar and equally agreeable remarks.

"Get on board the Tartar," repeated the officer, "what do you want there?"

"To join the ship's company."

"What!" said the officer, wholly unable to conceal his surprise, "what do you say you want?"

"To become one of her crew."

"Do you know the Captain," demanded the midshipman.

"No," said Charles, "I don't at all. Is that necessary?"

"Not exactly," quoth the midshipman.

"No! you will devilish soon do that, my young griffin," muttered one of the seamen, while nearly all of them were on the broad titter, from one end of the boat to the other.

Had Charles not known perfectly well the character of his intended commander, and resolutely made up his mind to run the risk of it, he most assuredly would never have ventured, to join that dreaded vessel, in defiance of the numerous well meant hints he that day received in the Tartar's boat. Perfectly aware as he was, however, of the

Captain's reputation, to him these various signs of the men's loathing, afforded the utmost amusement, while they in their turn, considering Charles as one of the very fools whom Heaven has destined to be the food of tyrants, now made no further effort to warn him of his danger.

The officer was, of course, obliged to receive, with the utmost gravity and decorum, every one who came in the character of a volunteer, though he could not help pitying the delicate-looking and unfortunate youth, who had now thrust himself into such danger. Making room for Charles in the stern sheets, without further colloquy, a short, stern command of 'shove off' was given; the boat's bow parted from the strand, the well trained and athletic crew bent to their quivering oars, and the beautifully formed cutter dashed over the seas, throwing up at every glance forward, fresh volumes of spray, whose minute particles rising swiftly in the sunbeams formed a pretty rainbow, that seemed to herald their boat towards the notorious ship, for which it was

making. Charles saw the curious and beautiful appearance, and with the sanguine readiness of youth to interpret all things favourably, he hailed the miniature iris as a certain prognostic of good fortune now about to rise on his hitherto clouded horoscope.

CHAPTER XXVII.

As soon as the boat reached the side of the Tartar, the midshipman of the watch, hailed the bowman to make fast the boat to the guesswarp boom, and come on board to dinner.

This order having been acknowledged, the midshipman who had brought the boat on board, ran up the steep side of the seventy-four to report his return from duty; the coxswain followed next to him, then the seamen taking hold of the man-ropes, proceeded lazily to drag themselves up the row of numerous steps that led to the gangway.

The lasttwo or three of the men, under pretence of shewing Charles how this matter, one of no slight difficulty to a landsman, was to be

accomplished, said to him, in a half kind of whisper, "Why, you infernal fool, you are never going to be mad enough to volunteer on board this ship, are you?"

"Yes I am, why not?"

"Why not! why, where have you been living all your life, that you could not find a single friend to tell you, what a perfect hell upon earth you are getting into; one half of us are ready to cut our own throats, and all of us ready to cut our skipper's."

"Oh! yes, I know all that," said Charles, "but still I have a particular fancy to belong to the Tartar, and I hope to have some fun here."

"Egad," said the seaman, "if you come here for fun, you will very soon wish yourself with the devil, for pastime."

"Well," thought our hero, even his firmness of purpose momentarily staggered, "if ill should come, from my resolute determination to sail with this Œdipus of a man, I shall have but little consolation in any woes that may befall me, and never surely was any mortal more thoroughly

and repeatedly warned of his danger, than I have been; however, here is to my old motto, Faint heart never won a fair Lady, and so Stern Fate lead on."

Taking hold of the man-ropes with as much determination as if they had led direct to the favour of Lady Siberia, our hero in a few minutes stood upon the quarter deck. He arrived just in time to hear a colloquy between the first lieutenant and the midshipman who had brought the boat on board.

"Well, Mr. Brownlow," said the former, who had come up from the gun-room, "did you leave the quarter-master in charge of the traps at the watering place?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the midshipman touching his hat, "I left him there with the usual orders."

"We shall finish watering the ship this evening, shan't we?"

"Oh! yes, Sir; the master only wants about forty hogsheads more to complete, and that I think we shall get done by four o'clock at latest."

"What is this the officer of the watch tells

me, that you have brought off a volunteer; why your lucky star must be fortunate, you are always stumbling upon some extraordinary chance or another, is he really a bonâ fide volunteer?"

"Perfectly so, Sir."

"Did you say nothing to him to sharpen his perception of the delights of a man of war, and gain yourself the honour of a recruit."

"Oh! no, Sir. I had not the chance even if I wished] it and, as for the recruit, I can't say any very great things of him, he is a mere boy after all, and by his build, is as likely as not to be blown away the first time he lays out on the yard-arm in a double reef top-sail breeze."

"Oh! he is such a griffin as that, is he? We must endeavour to lick the cub into shape some how or other; send the youngster aft." Then, turning round to the officer of the watch, the first lieutenant muttered, as he thought unheard, "There will be no managing the Skipper as soon as he comes off, and hears this! a *volunteer* for his ship, and that too in a port

where he has got a whole ten days character! why such a thing never happened to him before, that is ever since he had a command to himself."

"Aye!" answered the officer of the watch, "there is no mistake about that; won't he contrive to lug the thing in head and shoulders at the Admiral's dinner to-day."

"Aye! and if he does, half the captains there will set it down for a piece of rhodomontading."

"Or else," replied the other, "they will simply come to my conclusion, namely, that there is a bigger fool in the world than I could before have believed possible."

"Why, yes! but at any rate the poor unfortunate will have this consolation that he will be the only one of his particular kidney in the ship, what with the number of pressed men, the men drafted from other crews, and the sweet refuse of the various gaols in the kingdom, *the* volunteer will shine out as a most illustrious body. Well, is this your youth?" turning round as Charles was presented, on the

quarter deck by the midshipman who had brought him off.

"Yes, Sir," answered the latter.

"Well, my boy, do you want to volunteer for this ship?"

"I do, Sir," said Charles, modestly uncovering his head.

"And pray, may I ask," inquired the first lieutenant, "what made you select the Tartar before any other ship in the fleet?"

"Oh! certainly, Sir," answered our hero, with the most naïve candour and simplicity; "I heard that every body was afraid to sail with your Captain, and as I never knew what fear was, I thought I would come on board and see if I could discover——."

The first lieutenant bit his lips, and knowing himself right well what the fear of his Captain was, and having the same most vividly before his eyes, on hearing such language upon Captain Coxcomb's quarter-deck of all places, he paused in momentary hesitation as to what course he should adopt, and then rejoined:

"You must take care how you give such

answers as those, or you will very soon get yourself into trouble. A matter easily done, but not so easily avoided."

"I am sure I beg your pardon, Sir; I only thought you wanted the truth, and therefore I spoke it."

"Well, well, all I have to tell you is, you must keep your eye teeth about you, truth or no truth. Have you ever been to sea before?"

"Never, Sir."

"What can you do to make yourself useful?"

"Nothing, Sir."

"You are a nice lad to have in a man of war truly: what trade have you ever been in?"

"Skin line, Sir."

"Oh! that is of no use to us."

Charles was glad to hear this answer: it was the very thing he desired, and for this purpose he had rendered that reply to the previous question, which purposely avoided giving the least information that could lead to the supposition of his ever having been concerned in the making of shoes; he had no inclination to be thrust down on the orlop deck

cobbling all the old shoes of the captain and seven lieutenants, which he thought, and very prophetically thought, not only barely possible, but almost inevitable, if the authorities should by any accident discover what had formerly been his occupation; not only would such a result have interfered most materially with his learning his profession as a seaman, but the remembrance of his low calling was associated in his mind with the strongest feelings of abasement; it reminded him at once of the immeasurable distance between himself and the object of his adoration, and was altogether repugnant to every feeling of his soul; indeed so sore did Charles feel on this point, that nothing but great disparity of size would have prevented him from striking any man who had reminded him of his late calling.

For this purpose, he had also resolved in his own mind, as he walked over to Torbay, on no account to divulge the late place of his residence.

Our hero, we must say in his defence, was a

most systematic admirer of truth, but still he had not lived quite so long in the world without reading the celebrated axiom, the origin of which is so erroneously ascribed to Talleyrand, that speech was given him to conceal his thoughts; if therefore he should be very much pressed either about his residence or his trade, he determined stoutly to discard both.

Fortunately for his feelings he was not called upon to do either, as the first lieutenant appeared quite satisfied as to those points, and now demanded, "Since you cannot do any thing either useful or ornamental, and know nothing about a ship, what the devil made you seek out a man of war?"

"To learn the profession of a seaman, and to follow it," was Charles's reply.

"Well, well, you may get more of that perhaps than you like; all I say to you, is, once more, keep your eye teeth about you—this is no ship for skulkers, and any one of that kidney had better never have been born than find his way on board here."

"I am quite aware of that, Sir; you will find

there never was less of a skulk in any man, than there is in me."

"I am glad of it, for your sake; there get you down to the surgeon, and if he says you are sound in your wind, which I very much doubt, why we will pop you into the after-guard, and as soon as that is done, the clerk shall enter your name, and the captain of the after-guard put you in your mess; we must see and knock a little beef and pork into that lean skillagalee figure of yours, or you will never be worth a d——."

"Thank you, Sir; for your kind expressions, I promise to put into my skillagalee figure, all the beef and pork I can get, and hope soon to be as well worth a d—— as yourself, Sir."

"Well, well, be off with you," said the first lieutenant;—"and take care," chimed in the officer of the watch, "that tongue of yours does not bring you in a scrape, which it certainly seems very likely to do."

Charles, taking this hint, touched his bare locks to the high and mighty authorities of the quarter-deck, and followed the old quarter-

master, who acted as his guide down to the infernal regions of the cockpit; here he found one of the assistant surgeons in waiting for him, and a severe trial to his modesty in the request made by the man of science, that he would immediately strip.

This was a matter on which Charles never counted, and it certainly non-plussed him not a little, but endeavouring as well as he could to hide his blushes, he complied with the order; and after five minutes tapping, the assistant surgeon informed him that he was "all right in the lights," which Charles acknowledged to be a piece of cheering information, for one who had to be weighed in the balance; and the examination being over, and favourable to his qualities, as a running horse, the assistant surgeon went to report the same to the quarter deck, while the quarter-master conducted him to the captain of the after-guard, who introduced him to the master-at-arms, who delivered him over to the captain of his future mess, where he arrived just in time for part of a bad pease pudding, and a small matter of salt horse;

before he was allowed, however, to attack these, the four last named authorities, being all petty officers, and men in authority, thought it their duty to give a very wholesome piece of advice, the judgment of the court being delivered by the master-at-arms, with the three other puisne judges, all nodding a most learned approval.

The master-at-arms himself, was a great Methodist, and rather ascetic, like many people of his tribe, he was as thin as a whipping post, and considerably marked with the smallpox. That disease having a great affection for the skin of all ill conditioned, ill humoured people, in addition to all these peculiarities, he had the true snuffle of grace, which all your sectarians cultivate, and which it is to be feared may give in their future paradise, a somewhat curious tone to their psalmody ; moreover, the aforesaid master, having once served in the Marines, still thought his honour concerned in carrying himself as upright as the main-mast.

"I am sorry to hear, young man," began

he, in a tone so loud, that all the crew around could catch each word, "that you know not how to control that unruly member the tongue. If you want to escape the cat-o-nine tails for any term longer than 24 hours, never say a word more in answering an officer, than you can possibly help; for depend upon it, an English line-of-battle-ship is the very place alluded to, in the holy writ, where we are told to make our communications, yea, yea, and nay, nay."—

"And he who does more than that," chimed in the quarter-master, "is a d—— fool for his pains."

"Let me intreat of you, Quarter-master Morris, not to blaspheme in that inextinguishable style," said the saint to the seaman, triumphing in the consciousness of having got hold of a very fine word, but utterly reckless how or where he introduced it; then turning to Charles, he resumed, "I hope you won't fall into the profane habit of swearing, for perhaps I had better inform you, that it is against the 'articles of war.'"

"Many thanks for the information, which I certainly should not have discovered from the practice that seems to prevail on board, though I was well aware that a higher authority has forbidden so reprehensible a habit."

"Well, take your dinner, young man; we will discuss politics," meaning polemics, "another time." Here the master-at-arms, quite convinced that he had gone a long way towards saving the soul of Charles, stalked off to some other duty of grace,—to wit,—mixing the rum at the grog tub, where the surplus partly fell to his lot; while the captain of the mess, in no very good natured way, gave him a small portion of the untempting viands we have described. His wife, however, who was on board, taking compassion on Charles's forlorn condition, saw that he received what was necessary; and the nearly ravenous lad was at last on the point of getting some kind of food, when all other operations were suddenly suspended by the shrill whistle of the boatswain, and the loud pipe, much too well known on board that ship, "all hands."

"Here's the blessed skipper coming off again," cried the seamen on every hand, with curses, not loud but deep, upon his head, for thus tormenting them.

"What is the matter?" demanded Charles, who was busy in devouring his first mouthful.

"Matter," replied one of the men near him, "it is the usual matter, that spawn of a devil, Sir Henry, coming on board."

"Well, what is that to us, what have we to do with his coming on board, why don't we sit still to get our dinner? surely, Sir Henry Coxcomb can come on board by himself, if nothing has happened to him."

"No, by the powers of Moll Kenny, there is no such luck, but this is always the trick he is playing us four times a week; he pops off just as we have come below to dinner, and then every soul on board must show up to do him honour. Isn't it I, who would honour him, if I had my way," muttering a great deal much more significant, and wishing that the captain's heart was as cold as their dinners would be when they came back to them. Both

Charles and his companion followed the vast stream of six hundred men, herculean in their forms, rude in their unpolished manners, and possessing all the savageness of human nature, untamed by education; such were the men whom Captain Coxcomb took a delight in disturbing from the enjoyment of the principal comfort that cheered their life of trial, for the idle purpose of gratifying his individual vanity at their expence.

As Charles, in following them to the quarter-deck, heard the oaths of every form and description, which they levelled at the author of this useless piece of tyranny, he could not help reflecting how little such a man was to be pitied, if any vengeance overtook him with those he ill used; how scandalous was the conduct of the Admiralty in allowing such a man to retain a command, and how perilously faulty must be the whole naval system, which could permit the existence of abuses, so perfectly outrageous and so wholly beyond all remedy, at least as far as any appeal on the part of the seamen might be.

Charles was also not a little curious to see what manner of man this strange Captain could be, who thus made playthings of live tiger's paws; as he looked around and watched the seamen's inflamed and angry visages, and heard the suppressed growlings of their wrath, he could not help comparing them to a set of hungry lions, suddenly driven from the carcase of their warm prey; what man, he repeated to himself, can this fellow be like, who thus dares to torment creatures so ferocious and dangerous as these? Having taken his place on the quarter-deck, Charles, in his eagerness to see who and what his Captain might be like, endeavoured to peep through the gun-ports, all however that he could gain was a peep at some one in glittering uniform, and a cocked hat.

The boat was, however, still so far off that to discern the features of the party approaching was impossible; he was therefore obliged to content himself with waiting until this all important personage arrived upon the quarter-deck, when, no doubt, he, like the rest of the

seamen, would have the gratification of gazing at him instead of their dinner, an alternative which certain peccant feelings greatly reprobated.

Had poor Charles only have known who the Captain really was, and how large a share of his attention he (Charles) was destined soon to occupy, he certainly would have felt much less careless about the matter than he did at that present moment,—but sufficient for the hour was the evil thereof.

As the Captain's gig approached within a certain distance, the boatswain began that pipe of honour, which so delighted the organs of Sir Henry Coxcomb to hear, and all the due formality having been perfectly observed, the gallant Baronet, as courtesy requires he should be styled, availed himself of the red side ropes, those emblems of a Captain's Bashawism, and speedily stood upon the quarter-deck; another long shrill whistle followed this auspicious achievement; the circle of officers, with bare heads, fell back from around the gangway, where they had received

the potentate, with much the same precipitate respect, as would have been paid to a royal Bengal tiger that had suddenly burst its cage.

The chieftain, without noticing the salute in the slightest possible manner, stalked haughtily on along the starboard side of the quarter-deck, while his officers were fain to content themselves with the larboard.

Up to this moment, Charles had had no opportunity of catching a glimpse of the dreaded body, whom he was so anxious to behold, and respecting whom he could not help entertaining, much to his own surprise, some curious and instinctive impression, he hardly knew why. No words within the power of author, nor any fancy within the stretch of reader, can, however, do justice to the surprise, the horror—the dismay—the bewilderment, that by turns assailed his bosom, when in the person of Sir Henry Coxcomb—he beheld—his wild and extraordinary acquaintance of the road—the redoubted Vampire!!—The man to whom he had propounded the most desperate

doctrines, and from whom only he could hope for any one of those advantages, by the possession of which alone could he expect to reap the anticipated benefits, of his rash but daring entrance into the Navy; the man whom he had forewarned of all his schemes, by saying how much he depended on his kind favour and interest; whose throat, he had most coolly told him, he would most deliberately cut, the moment he should consider he deserved it; and to such a man too! such an uncontrollable savage! As to pardon, it was quite clear he could never expect that, and to his apprehensive eyes the whole scheme of his naval service was blasted:—could he not escape to the shore, and enter some other ship?—Alas! the deed was done; the doom was irrevocable, and what he had to expect, Heaven only knew.—

END OF VOL. I.

G. NORMAN, PRINTER, MAIDEN LANE, COVENT GARDEN.

THE

CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

THE

CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF CAVENDISH.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN, NAVAL SURGEON, PORT ADMIRAL,
ETC. ETC. ETC.

"Lovelie, yet counting not her charmes,
Wise, yet pretending not to knowe,
Gentle in peace, unbending 'midst alarms,
Warm within Vertue, and beyond it snowe,
To her who brings this treasure to my arms
I for such sumless gifte more worlds of Love will owe,
Than Jove could rule or Titans overthrowe.
Passions are likened best to floods and streames,
The shallow murmur, but the deepe are dumb,
So when affections yield discourse it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come;
Then wrong not, dearest to my heart, my love for secret passion,
He smarteth most that hides his smart and sues for no compassion."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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1842.

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Halting, suddenly, in his slow march, upon the quarter-deck, Sir Henry Coxcomb faced about, and with his glass cocked in his eye, immovable as his pride, he scrutinized the group of officers, who, in fear and trembling, remained walking up and down on the other side of the ship. In an incredibly short space of time, he seemed to have counted and recognized every officer who was present, and this he speedily made manifest by detecting the absence of one unfortunate mate, who, being

engaged in superintending the men's grog, had thought himself thus privileged to abstain from presenting himself in honour of his superior, upon the quarter-deck.

"Where is Mr. Burlston, Sir," demanded Sir Henry of the first Lieutenant.

"Is he not on deck, Sir?" said the second in command, who it may be remarked was always prepared for a breeze, whenever the Captain did them the honour thus to disturb the officers and ship's company at their dinner.

"I think it ought to be your duty to know, and not to ask me, Mr. Ferrit, (the first Lieutenant's name); where is the officer of the watch?"

"Here Sir," said the apprehensive man, stepping forward in considerable trepidation, he knew not exactly why.

"What steps did you take to inform the officers of my coming on board?" commenced Sir Henry.

"I sent the quarter-master down, Sir, to inform them all."

"Send the quarter-master here."

A venerable looking old man crept forth from behind the steerage wheel, and while his hat was removed from his head with his right hand, he continually employed the left in plastering down upon his shining pericranium the few white hairs that age had left.

"Quarter-master, did you tell Mr. Burlston I was coming?"

"Yes, I did, Sir, and he was busy at the grog."

"Take care, old man! take care! confine your answers to my questions, will you; I don't care where an officer is busy, Sir; when his Captain is coming on board it is his duty to be on the quarter-deck with the rest of the crew; in my ship every man is to do his duty, be it what it may, now quarter-master, did he hear what you said?"

Here one of the junior midshipmen, made an effort to steal below, through one of the hatchways, and send up the delinquent to make his peace before worse befel him, but Coxcomb's eye, vigilant as a hawk's, not only saw the attempt, but instantly divined its motive.

"Stay, Sir, where are you going?" said he

as rapidly, arresting the departure of the poor tell-tale youngster, who had been forced to this act of desperation, by the threats of one of the oldsters, afraid to make the attempt himself, and who had therefore considered it most prudent, to take the chesnut out of the fire with the cat's paw. The unhappy boy, who had only been a month or two at sea, seemed to quiver to his very marrow, as the harsh relentless voice of his tyrannical Captain announced to him the fact of his discovery; he immediately stopped, hesitating for his answer, and tried to back behind the shadow of the group of officers.

"Where were you going, Sir?" still more angrily repeated Sir Henry, transfixing the youngster to the spot with fear, while the colour mounted into his face to a painful degree.

"I—I—I," stammered the lad, looking round to his seniors to assist him, but they were too far beyond hearing, and at last the little fellow managed to get out, "I left my pocket handkerchief below, Sir Henry."

"That is a lie, Sir," was the polite reply; "or, taking it at the best for truth, go to the mast head for six hours for presuming to come on the quarter-deck undrest."

The exile here touched his hat, and without further word proceeded to mount the rigging

"Now, Sir," recommenced the Captain, with evident signs of satisfaction at having thus disposed of one offender, "when you told Mr. Burlston the Captain was coming, what answer did he make?"

"I don't exactly remember, Sir."

"What answer did he make, Sir?" repeated the Captain, stamping his foot upon the deck with rage.

"Nothing particular, Sir," replied the quarter-master, evidently confused and stammering, so as to make it quite evident that there was some mischief in the back ground yet destined to come out.

"Give me every word of the answer, Sir, word for word."

"I beg your pardon, Sir, but I don't think I can recollect it."

"Word for word, this instant, Sir, or take four dozen at the gangway."

"Very well, your honour, if I must I must, though I am sorry for it;" and the noble-hearted old tar took off his jacket, and began to strip, as the best proof he could give of his generous but vain devotion to save young Burlston, who was very popular in the ship as a smart clever seaman, and one who under circumstances of great peril had twice successfully jumped over-board to save drowning men. It was quite evident from the reluctancy of the quarter-master to mention Burlston's reply, that it had been something extremely imprudent. A feather almost might have been heard to drop upon any part of the upper deck during this part of the colloquy, and when the old quarter-master — who had served in many distinguished ships without the slightest impeachment upon his character until now— stood bared for punishment, an audible buz of emotion ran round the lines of the excited crew, many of whose eyes seemed almost starting from their heads with intense

rage, as they watched the issue of their Captain's tyrannical conduct.

Sir Henry Coxcomb, in the mean while, eyed the quarter-master with the most ferocious scowl of malignity, and appeared to pause in deliberation as to what line of conduct he should pursue; at length having settled this in his own mind, after gnashing his lip till the blood trickled half way to his chin, he said, in a voice of the most unnatural calmness,

"Mr. Ferrit, order the carpenters to rig the gratings, then take two corporals of marines, and go and see that Mr. Burlston is brought upon the quarter-deck without one word of explanation, with any living creature."

"Ay, ay, Sir," said Mr. Ferrit, with the air of a man compelled to take part in some proceeding which he cordially detests, and having given the necessary commands to the carpenter's crew, and picked out the marines specified, he descended to the deck below, where he found Mr. Midshipman Burlston coolly lying across one of the long guns, muttering to himself various wonders as to what could be the cause of such long

delay upon the quarter deck; he might well be wished joy of his enlightenment when he heard the first Lieutenant's grave voice command him to rise, and beheld the marines with their glittering bayonets advancing towards him.

"Why, why, what is the matter?" demanded that aspiring youth starting to his feet.

"The Captain requires you upon the quarter deck immediately," was the first Lieutenant's reply.

"May I venture to ask what for, Sir?" inquired the unfortunate accused, instantly complying with the summons.

"Ask no questions," was the first Lieutenant's answer, given in a tone of voice that admitted no further debate, and with the utmost silence they now all proceeded to the quarter deck where they found the gratings rigged for punishment, the quarter master seized up to them, his bare back glistening in the sun and helplessly at the mercy of his tormentor, while the latter stood by holding in his hand the articles of war, his cocked hat

taken from his head and laid upon the capstan, and every other person fore and aft uncovered; in short, the whole disgusting process of punishment begun, except the falling of the nine-tailed lash itself, which, however, stood quite ready for the gross injustice in the hands of the boatswain.

"Mr. Burlston," said the Captain, "this quarter master has been asked what you said when he told you the Captain was coming; he does not choose to inform me, are you desirous that he should be punished to hide your delinquencies?"

"No, Sir, certainly not," said Burlston, with the frank open-hearted manner which always distinguished him.

"Then at once repeat to me, word for word, what it was you said to him when he delivered to you that message from the officer of the watch."

Burlston took some brief seconds to consider, and then appearing to grow sadly confused he replied, "I remember now, Sir, the thoughtless answer I did give, and am aware that it is ex-

tremely improper, and I hope that you will allow me any punishment due to my own fault without doing the service the disgrace and harm of my repeating it."

"Word for word, Sir, as you gave it."

"Really I hope, Sir, that this will not appear to you indispensable: any punishment that you may think fit to give me I shall bear with cheerfulness."

"Give me your reply, Sir, word for word."

Here Burlston's unfortunate awkwardness and confusion seemed to be so excessive that at last he stammered out,

"Perhaps you will allow me, Sir Henry, to tell it you in private."

"Certainly not," was the stern reply; "here, on the open quarter deck, before the whole ship's company, I insist that you, syllable for syllable, repeat your answer."

"Why, I am afraid, Sir Henry, that it may hurt your own feelings."

"Think for yourself, Sir, and not for me; do as I order you this instant."

"Very well, Sir, when the quarter master

came down to me, I was busy preparing to serve out the grog; He said the Captain is coming; and then, Sir, I, merely alluding to an old sea saying, said in reply—meaning no harm I assure you, Sir,"—here there came a deep pause;—it was quite evident that the midshipman could not bring himself to repeat his unfortunate jocularity, and after giving him several minutes pause to do so, the Captain thundered forth,

"Well, Sir, what did you say?"

"Please, Sir, I said, 'Well, quarter master, you had better hoist him in by the horns.'"

Every one on deck had long since made up their minds that the answer contained some mutinous matter, or at least some frightful oath, but when, instead, the whole affair resolved itself into this ludicrous complexion, there was a general titter of laughter all round the decks.

In an instant, Sir Henry had his glass fixed in his eye, and woe betide the unhappy wight whom he had then caught laughing at his ridicule; moreover, the speech might be a very amusing matter to all third parties, but it

was scarcely within the ingenuity of man to have framed any insult that could have proved more deeply galling to the individual in question; the allusion was one that might be nothing, or it might allude to the deadliest wound a man's honour can receive. When Sir Henry heard the words his cheek turned to the most deadly colour, and his body literally shook with passion, while his eyes, at no time very pleasing in their aspect, glared as horribly on the offender, as if his mind were occupied with the mortifying regret that he could not then and there slay the offender on the spot.

Presently, in a voice still husky with the conflict of passion, for it was quite clear that he had accepted the words in their deadliest sense, he demanded, "Pray, Sir, what did you mean when you made use of those expressions?"

"On my word and honour as a gentleman I had no meaning at all; I simply used the words as an old sea phrase, which you may happen to know it is."

"Did you or did you not, Sir, mean it to reflect on the character of any one beside myself?"

"Most certainly not, Sir: I heard it in the service long before I had the honour of serving under you, and when I was guilty of the error of making use of it, I had not the slightest meaning whatever. I have no doubt, Sir, that all the other officers on board will inform you how very common a phrase it is, even if you should not already have heard it yourself."

For a brief space longer, Sir Henry continued to regard the midshipman, as if at a loss to determine in his own mind the amount of revenge he could inflict, and while thus debating, an interruption occurred that not only startled all hands, but even to the cheek of Sir Henry himself, appeared to bring an equal portion of surprise.—This was nothing less than a maid servant, who tripping very demurely out from the Captain's cabin, and advancing up to Sir Henry's side, said, in a low voice, which, perhaps contrary to the speaker's intention, the general silence of astonishment rendered perfectly audible.

"Please, Sir Henry, my lady wants you in the cabin directly."—Sir Henry started as he

heard this message, as if doubting that he had been mistaken, and while to all appearance engaged in fixing the fact in his own mind, the servant had time to gain the cabin once more. At last the Captain, seemingly convinced that such a message had been sent to him, replied "Very well," and then, turning once more to the culprit, resumed,

"Now, Sir"—but what was now to come was yet very doubtful—the gallant baronet was clearly thinking of any thing but that which he was going to say;—perhaps his mind was still wandering over the matter touching which his lady required him in the cabin.—At any rate after several seconds pause, he once more commenced, "from this hour forth, Sir"—But what was to date forward from that dreadful hour seemed still in the clouds,—as here the same demure little face came gliding out from the cabin once more, and, peering up from the dreaded Captain's elbow, repeated again, "Please, Sir Henry, my lady says you must come to her directly,—you're not to wait, Sir. She wants you this instant."—There was

something so truly ludicrous in one, on whom his own rough men dared scarcely look, being thus summarily ordered about by a little being in petticoats, that several of the hearers had much difficulty to controul their risible propensities.—But a laugh would have been too dangerous a matter to be lightly risked, and Sir Henry, after knitting his brows most ominously for a minute or two, thought fit to comply with the command received, and without further word to those around him, turned on his heel, and walked into his own cabin, bearing the articles of war in his hand.

"Why could you not come at once, when I sent for you?" demanded Lady Coxcomb, not giving her "lord and master" time to utter a single word, on his gaining her majestic presence.

"What rather could induce you to send for me at such a time and place?" replied Sir Henry, rather more warmly than he was accustomed to address his imperious help-mate.

"Because I insist on knowing how you propose to punish that young wretch, Burlston."

"Why, what can his punishment matter to you?"

"Everything; I consider his language to be the most personal insult that could possibly be levelled against myself.—I insist on his being flogged at the gangway, like one of the common seamen."

"Impossible, Lady Coxcomb, the punishment would be too marked for the offence."

"What, Sir Henry!—what! how is it possible that anything can be more marked?—But thus it always happens. Every person is licensed to insult me with impunity!!"—

"As to that, Lady Coxcomb, nothing can be more unjust.—In this case, if I make the punishment too heavy it will achieve the very point I am anxious to avoid; namely, the belief that you were ever alluded to in the speech at all, whereas I can give him a severe punishment already, for the disrespect to myself, and any future opportunity if you still feel yourself aggrieved, your feelings can be—ahem—ahem—respected by an increase of punishment."

"And pray, Sir," demanded her ladyship,

striding to and fro in the cabin, "what punishment, as you mockingly call it, did you propose this ribald to receive?"

"Why, I think if I stop his leave and put him in watch and watch, you will have nothing to complain of."

"What, do you call that punishment?—Once more I insist on his being flogged at the gangway."

"It is impossible—or at least impolitic."

"At any rate then, I demand that he shall be turned out of the ship."

"Come, Lady Coxcomb, at any rate that will be no punishment."

"Then once more I say flog him."

"Unwise!—Most unwise!—stay! I can do this for you—I will disrate him as a midshipman, and put him before the mast as a foremast man, and after that at any future time he may be flogged without much stretch of one's authority."—

"Well, if you will promise to flog him—but remember it is on that promise alone I forego—"

"—I will—" Then suddenly turning round he beheld in the corner of the cabin the terrified lady's maid. "What have you done here listening," said he, stamping his foot at the poor creature, who stood as though ready to sink into the deck.

"Please, Sir, I haven't been listening," replied the damsel, at imminent risk of that truthful character, which it is well known all lady's maids would die to preserve.

Taking Lady Coxcomb aside into the after cabin, and closing the door, Sir Henry, in a voice of low emotion, said, as he pointed to the culprit, "That girl must be sent on shore."

"Pooh! Pooh! nothing of the sort," replied the gentle spouse, "why think of such a thing?"

"Has she not listened to every word between us, and will not the whole travel through every deck of the ship before we are twenty-four hours older?"

"Let it," was the resolute answer of the bold spirit before him, "though it travelled from Dan to Beersheba they could not help themselves. Why so solicitous about the words of

any created mortal? learn to be above and tread upon them all—go and fulfil your word upon that wretch outside, and leave me to manage my own women as I choose."

The gallant baronet looked undecided for a brief period, and then, as if slowly coming into his wife's views of the matter, gradually unclosed the door, the lock of which he still held in his hand, strode through the fore-cabin, gained the quarter-deck, and there, once more knowing it was his to conquer and command, after a brief pause to re-adjust his ruffled dignity, thus addressed Burlston,—

"Now, Sir, in consequence of what has passed"—here a voice from among the seamen cried out—'*where, where*'—in an instant Coxcomb looked round, but not a lip could be seen to move—and once more the gallant baronet proceeded—

"In consequence of what has passed I disrate you, from this hour; you are no longer on the quarter-deck of this ship, but among the foremast-men—put his name down as able seaman, Anderson," turning to his clerk, "and

do you, Mr. Ferrit, station him in the fore-top. Now, quarter-master, if that young man had not told me what were the disrespectful and unofficer-like words he used, I should have given you four dozen lashes, two dozen for screening his fault and two dozen for your own, in not immediately obeying my commands, and telling me what passed. Burlston's fault I have already visited with a lightened punishment, in consequence of his having refused to screen himself at your expense, but your error however still remains as unpardonable as before, I shall now therefore let you off with two dozen lashes for disobedience of orders."

The Captain then read the article of war, and ordering the boatswain's mate to do his duty, the old man received his punishment without a groan.

As soon as he was cast off, the Captain in the same amiable accent that had distinguished him hitherto, now called out, "Bring forward the volunteer who entered this morning."

As Charles heard these terrible words, in

which all his worst fears seemed about to be realized, his heart appeared leaping into his mouth; if such was the treatment Captain Coxcomb awarded to such comparatively venial offences, what would be the punishment to be inflicted on himself; he who had gone so far in giving utterance to matters of such defying import; however to fear was idle, and if death was now at hand, or if not death that which must lead to it, his own unauthorized punishment, he was determined at least to prove with how much fortitude he could meet the dreadful blow; waiting till the first lieutenant called his name, he stepped forward before Sir Henry, and made a most profound bow, while the old sickly affectation of a smile came over the Vampire's face, as if he were now glorying in having completely in his power one who before seemed to contemn him.

"I think we have had the pleasure of meeting before," said Sir Henry.

Charles discreetly bowed and said nothing, but the other, determining not to let him off so easily, demanded, "Is it not so, Sir? speak."

"I believe, we have, Sir," said our hero, reluctantly admitting what he thought it might be dangerous to deny.

"Pray, do you wish me to inform you what hour it is now, Sir?"

"No, Sir Henry," replied Charles, with a boldness that afterwards astonished himself, "I think I can inform you on that point."

"And what, pray," continued the superior, somewhat taken aback by this unexpected display of moral courage, by one whom he doubtless concluded would have been utterly cowed by the unusual and revolting spectacle he had beheld, wholly unaccustomed to it as he doubtless was, "what, pray, may the hour be in your calculation?"

"The hour, Sir, to learn my duty and to do it."

The ship's company and officers, who knew nothing of the previous by-play on shore naturally enough looked on in perfect wonderment at the lad whom they considered such a perfect fool, for his voluntarily making such a reply as they had heard, and displaying such

perfect coolness in the presence of one before whom they were accustomed to shake to their very shoe ties.

Captain Coxcomb himself also, it must be confessed, had little expected such perfect self-possession in one so young, under circumstances so trying, and it was perhaps a toss-up of chances whether at that moment he took the resolution of utterly ruining or advancing the bold speaker.

After taking time to consider, as was his usual custom, he seemed to have adopted the former relentless bias. Once more the withering smile stole over his features as he continued, "If I mistake not, young man, you told me when we met on shore, that if any captain of yours unjustly flogged you, you would be revenged on him,—are those your intentions?"

"Sir Henry Coxcomb," said Charles mildly but firmly, "if I ever saw you on shore, which I believe I did, whatever conversation then took place between us, it was without the slightest knowledge that I was addressing a post-captain, neither had it the least reference

to any thing that may ever take place in this ship. I then considered myself at liberty to broach any doctrines I pleased, and may certainly have advocated some on which I never thought seriously, from the mere pleasure of supporting a paradox, but it does not at all follow that I should ever contemplate the same feelings now when I am no longer my own master, but the servant of my king, and therefore once for all permit me to inform you that I do not wish to support any opinion I may have given on shore at all at variance with my duties in the Navy; but that, on the contrary, I shall for ever form my opinions on the 'Articles of War,' and that with regard to my being unjustly flogged, I hope ever to look upon that, as a thing utterly impossible, so long as I continue under the protection of Sir Henry Coxcomb."

"I will soon show you that, Sir—STRIP!"

This was the important crisis of Charles's life, the one wrong step would have terminated all his hopes and happiness. With the rapidity of lightning his exquisite good sense pointed out

the whole bearings of the case, without a moment's hesitation, without a single appeal, without even the slightest change of countenance, off flew his jacket, away went his braces with as much alacrity as if he had been about to plunge into the delights of the bath, instead of to undergo the most horrible torture of the lash ;— a torture which, if he had to undergo it, should, he was most fully resolved, terminate in the death both of himself and his tyrant.

Dazzlingly white as any thing animate could be, the upper portion of Charles' fair but slender form was now seen gleaming in the rays of the sun. Allowing his hands to droop beside him, looking most respectfully down upon the quarter-deck, while all his warm and loving thoughts were wandering back for one brief moment to the two fair beings he most adored on earth, he stood thus calmly waiting the dreadful issue of life or death.

Finding at length that his Captain said nothing, he ventured to look up and beheld his superior's gaze rivetted on the small gold coin which the Lady Siberia had given, and

which had hung ever since upon the spot where he had placed it. So absorbed had he been in thinking of the adored donor that her gift had utterly escaped his remembrance. His conduct on this trying occasion had so entirely won for him the regard of all hands, that not an eye was there but what was fixed upon his youthful figure, where the agitated heart could plainly be perceived palpitating at every bound, as if about to break away from the bosom that confined it; while not one of the six hundred and odd spectators there present failed to offer up their warmest wishes for the escape of the courageous yet respectfully-spoken lad.

In the midst of this pause, Sir Henry cocked his atrocious glass within his eye and took a cool survey all round, the action being as much as to say, "No doubt you think I am going to do something very extraordinary, but I will keep your curiosity on the tenter-hooks as long as I possibly can."

At last, when he seemed to have satiated himself with this moral torture of all around, he addressed our hero in the same slow tone he had hitherto used, saying—

"Well, Sir, I see you have not overrated your knowledge; you not only know that this is the hour to learn your duty, but have done it. When I told you to strip, it was your duty to do as I told you, even though you should imagine you had committed no fault, and you have done well. Had you remonstrated, instead of obeying, I should immediately have given you the same punishment as the quarter-master, two dozen, namely, for disobedience of orders:—blind, literal, and implicit obedience is the first quality and the highest virtue either in the seaman or the officer, and as a public proof that I can reward this good quality, as liberally as I shall always punish its opposite vice, I now bestow upon you the vacant rating of midshipman which Mr. Burlston thought fit to lose by his own misconduct.—*Pipe down!*"

In an instant Captain Coxcomb's back was turned upon the whole astonished assemblage of officers and crew, and striding aft without further word towards his cabin, they saw the door of the latter suddenly close upon his lean withered figure, and the crew as rapidly dart-

ing down to their neglected dinners, our hero quickly found himself standing half-naked and wholly stupified—*an officer!*—upon the quarter-deck of his Majesty's line-of-battle ship the 'Tartar'!—

CHAPTER II.

Although it may be difficult to characterize the feelings even of the others who looked on while the scene above described was acting, this latter task is of all things most easy, compared with that of describing our hero's own sensations at such an unexpected promotion; the long wished-for prize was advanced to him at a single stage, by the most marked and decided step, and why he scarcely knew.—For many seconds surprise left him literally unable to apply his thoughts to reason on his good fortune, and at last giving up the task as hopeless, he looked round towards his brother midshipmen.

Seeing the latter took no notice of him, after he had stood some minutes on the quarter-deck, while the other youngsters ran swiftly down to

their now cold meal, the first lieutenant kindly approached our hero, and putting out his hand said—

"I beg to wish you joy of your promotion; do not trouble yourself that none of your future messmates distress you with their congratulations, they will follow in due time, I only trust you will be able to keep this advancement with as much firmness as you gained it; put your clothes on as rapidly as possible, and then ask your way to my cabin; I hope I have a jacket which will suit you better than the one you have on, and remember that you dine with us in the ward-room this afternoon."

To this generous conduct, to say the truth, our hero had no words to answer in reply; from sheer excess of feeling and with the tears starting on his cheeks he mechanically followed the first lieutenant into the ward-room. Here Charles was accommodated with a few old articles of dress which his new rank demanded, and in addition to this kindness, the first lieutenant gave him a brief outline of the conduct most desirable for him to pursue, he himself

led the new youngster to the midshipman's berth, and introduced him to those with whom he was to reside.

So long as the first lieutenant was standing by, the attention of the midshipmen was faultless, but on the instant that the new comer stood alone, every point of dress, person, and manner was made the subject of discussion. Charles, to make the story short as need be, was allowed to experience the benefit of the contrast between a superior's approbation and an equal's jealousy; those very youngsters who a brief space since, had scarcely dared to draw the breath of life, now allowed our hero to stand alone, while all the rest amused themselves in any possible manner, and scarcely pretended to be aware of his presence; at last one youngster out of the lot offered his seat to the excluded volunteer, who by this means obtaining room at the inhospitable board, at last made shift to get a wretched luncheon, which for many had been so sadly but for him so joyfully interrupted.

It certainly did not add to his comfort that

Burlston, the man whose vacancy he had obtained, was sitting at the same table with his former messmates, notwithstanding the late dreadful sentence that had been passed upon him.

All the epithets that could possibly be applied to the Captain were by the excited youngster now levelled upon Sir Henry Coxcomb.

Notwithstanding all the evil in the disposition of the latter, that had come under the eye of Charles, he could not help feeling a strong degree of sorrow at hearing the character of a man to whom he certainly owed so much, thus harshly dealt with, even though deservedly.

The rest of the mess had throughout used their best endeavours to moderate Burlston's anger, but in vain. Charles could not help seeing that sundry looks were directed towards him, but setting them down to the mere fact of his being a new comer, he paid them no further attention. The real truth was this, the lad who had given Charles his seat, was the only son of Sir Henry, who had long been

accused of playing the part of tattler to his father, and always ready to be suspicious, the youngsters now beheld in the accidental kindness of the one lad to the other, a sort of free-masonry which made them believe that our hero was equally given to betray them, even if they did not go as far as to consider him some dependent of the Captain brought on board for the purpose, and thrust forward into another man's shoes, according to a preconcerted plan which had certainly been most admirably enacted. This impression was certainly most unfortunate for Charles, since acting upon it the midshipmen resolved one and all to send him to Coventry, and classing him in the same description with that of young Coxcomb, they were both set down under one description, and a universal resolution to make them the subject of similar attacks.

Despite the sentence which had just been awarded to him as a matter of thoughtlessness, the midshipmen insisted on receiving Burlston into their mess, without entering into the justice or injustice of such conduct.

Sir Henry no sooner heard of this intention than he gave orders for the disrated midshipman to be excluded and placed in one of the messes belonging to the men, besides conveying to the caterer an intimation that if he ever allowed the delinquent to return again to the bosom of their flock, he, the said caterer, would share the fate of the man they pitied.

CHAPTER III.

The day after our hero's sudden elevation, Sir Henry sent for him by his clerk, and both these two having repaired to his cabin, the Captain told him that he would require certain articles of dress and outfit, for which the clerk would give him money to the extent of fifty pounds as a loan, to be returned as soon as either his pay or prize money, or other opportunity enabled him to do so. Charles was about to return him those overflowing thanks which he could not but entertain for conduct so liberal, but abruptly waving his hand towards the door, the Baronet turned his back on them, and the clerk informing him that the ship was to sail on the morrow, hurried him on shore to buy those matters he required; this errand was soon accomplished and Charles on the evening

of that day, suddenly found himself transferred to the rank of a gentleman, and though in his own surprise he could scarcely believe in the change that so brief a space had wrought in his destiny, he felt compelled to acknowledge its truth in the jealousy which led all the other youngsters in the ship to annoy him to their utmost.

He had not been long on board before one by one some singular stories reached his ears, relative to the peculiarities which marked Sir Henry's character, and perhaps accounted for the capricious tyranny that still distinguished his whole conduct; indeed the latter opinion constantly filled him with terror, lest the same hand that had suddenly raised his fortunes, should with equal rapidity destroy them, and the only recourse against an event so much dreaded, was to make the best possible use of his time, by learning every thing within his reach, since, however rapidly reduced to the rank from which he rose, such acquisition could not but prove the happiest fortune; moreover, such a prudent course would advance his never

forgotten projects on shore, enable him better to discharge his duty, and by possibly rendering him of some slight use to the Baronet, inducing the latter still further to maintain, if not to improve those humble fortunes, which he now believed to have been owing as much to sudden whims and other extrinsic motives, as to his own conduct.

In these views he was much aided by the clerk and assistant surgeon, the former enabling him to perfect his handwriting, and the latter lending him his books, and supplying as far as possible the want of previous tutors on shore.

In addition to these sources of general improvement, Charles had bestowed some portion of his remaining money on one of the smartest quarter-masters, who in his watch upon deck spared no effort to make him a thorough master of seamanship, as far as his rude notions of it went; to this conduct generally he added a line of tactics not less valuable—that of discharging his duty with the utmost exactitude, gentleness, and attention, and gene-

rally comported himself so quietly that Sir Henry scarcely was allowed to remember that he was on board.

Various acts of tyranny and savage caprice had that meek-tempered philosopher committed, but while Charles beheld these and the detestation poured upon their author from all sides, he felt with double severity each culpable act, and with his horror at the tyranny was mingled the most bitter regret that such deeds should generate from the man who had laid him under such deep obligation, which he could never hope to repay.

Sometimes he felt convinced that Sir Henry's acts were the fruits of insanity, and at other times the outrageous results of some undying remorse, that would only grant him relief while plunging into the excitement of new errors: certainly there were circumstances connected with his history which seemed to bear out this proposition.

Whatever might be his employment, he was constantly rushing into some new occupation, the same corroding aspect of secret and inde-

scribable misery appeared to weigh him down; even in the broad noon day sun, when walking alone upon the quarter deck, he would start as if some image beside him had formed an unseen companion to his exercise; while the colour would rush into his face and forehead, leaving him pale and livid as a corpse, and the perspiration streamed down his face in large and frequent drops—the flesh appeared to creep upon his very bones, and then after muttering something indistinctly, of which only the words 'it cannot be,' 'a cheat,' 'spirits can do no harm,' and other similar expressions, would reach the ears of those around. In the night, moreover, it was no unfrequent thing for the surgeon to be summoned to his bed-side, and find him trembling and exhibiting the most decided symptoms of intense and agonized fear, and insisting the cabin should be searched for some intruder, although the lamps which he constantly kept burning in his bed room rendered it as light as day, and made it utterly impossible that any person should secrete themselves from view. On these occasions it was, accord-

ing to the statements of the servants, that her Ladyship his wife evinced a strange repugnance never to trust him alone, for an instant, with any other person; whatever the surgeon might have to communicate to the patient, or the patient to the surgeon, Lady Coxcomb sat by unmoved to hear it all, even though her husband frequently appealed to her to be left alone, not in the imperious haughty way in which his wishes were indicated to all other people, but rather in that of some humble suppliant, who sought some act of grace from one he dreaded.

To all such appeals, however, her Ladyship seemed inexorable, for she never parted from his side, nor allowed him to utter a syllable she did not hear,—put down his fears rather with a rough ridicule than any soothing persuasion: and treated the whole as the result of a disordered digestion acting upon a nervous system of no strong mould. Strange words, however, it was whispered, fell from the tortured lips of Sir Henry on these occasions; and more than once there was an attempt to begin some recital —to allude to some past story, which required

to be checked by her Ladyship with such strong language, and such excited interest, as plainly proved the existence of a curious mystery behind.

On one occasion Sir Henry had even gone so far as to ask if the ship's chaplain were asleep; an inquiry that seemed to inflict upon his wife as exquisite a torture as the husband's disordered visions imposed on him. Another singular circumstance was much commented on throughout the ship, that although for this woman he had got into such deep disgrace, although it was known that she exercised a powerful influence over the regulation of nearly all things in the ship, her son, to whom she bore no possible resemblance, but whom she appeared to worship with the most jealous care, never received the slightest notice by word or look from her husband. Her boy was a quiet, mild, meek child, some fourteen years of age, engaging in his manners and appearance, and altogether such a son as even the most flinty heart would have regarded with affection. But though Sir Henry absolved him from all duty,

and by the particularity of his orders secured him from any risk by the service, not in the slightest look or expression would any third party have recognized the connection between them.

There were also some singular stories afloat respecting the manner at which he arrived at the Baronetcy. It was asserted that he had once possessed an elder brother, who had a wife and family, but who scarcely lived to enjoy the first year's rent, or indeed any of his blood. What had become of the wife or her children? No one, at least on board, seemed to possess the slightest knowledge.

Whether these matters had their foundation in any reasonable proportion of truth, or whether they were principally the exaggerations of vulgar credulity, it was difficult for Charles to ascertain, at any rate he sighed over the unfortunate fact, that the brightest part of his prospects depended on the protection and furtherance of a man whose escutcheon seemed to have in it the only one bright quartering of his conduct towards himself.

Fortune had, however, smiled so benignly on him up to this point, that it would indeed have been the height of ingratitude to anticipate evil. Contenting himself, therefore, with writing to his sister a long account of his good fortune, he took the wise resolution of doing every thing in his power to render himself worthy of promotion, and leaving all the rest to heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW days after Charles had thus rapidly completed his equipment, the fleet sailed with a fair wind down Channel, and the 'Tartar' was ordered to join three other ships under the command of a Rear-Admiral, to convoy a large squadron from Cork to the West Indies; by the time they had arrived in the Irish harbour, our hero's messmates had so far become reconciled to his promotion as passively to admit that such a mark of the Captain's favour might have fallen on a far more disagreeable lad. And though they still nourished an extraordinary notion that he was a spy upon their movements, they nevertheless took him somewhat more into their councils, than they at first seemed inclined to do.

As the convoy was ready to sail immediately for its destination, all leave was of course stopped, but the midshipmen, anxious as youths naturally are to stretch their limbs beyond the narrow confines of the ship, spirited up Sir Henry Coxcomb's son to ask for a boat to row to a creek just abreast of the ship, on which were then built some extensive saw-mills, since destroyed by fire.

Sir Henry, when he complied with this request, strictly enjoined his son to choose his party, and to see that none of them left the narrow strip of beach that was in sight of the ship. What was his motive for such order it would be vain to conjecture, perhaps it was simply the desire to accomplish the impossibility of keeping midshipmen out of mischief.

Promising a strict compliance with his commands, seven of the youngsters set off, including our hero, and Sir Henry's son; and in one of the Tartar's cutters, they pulled direct to the creek in question. Having landed, they first began to amuse themselves by bathing; this exercise over, some ill-starred wight, unable to

resist the sound of the sawing-mills close at hand, proposed a visit of inspection.

Sir Henry's son remonstrated strongly against this as an infraction of his father's orders. We have already stated, that his companions were sufficiently jealous of his authority and connection with Sir Henry, and led by this feeling they now taunted him in variety of ways, until they over-persuaded the boy to accompany them. This effected, they next tried their hand at equally misleading our hero, but Charles, more than proof against any efforts they could make, not only steadily refused to go, but warmly reprobated their folly and ingratitude, to say nothing of untruth, in thus promising one line of conduct, in order to win an indulgence, and pursuing a directly opposite course on the instant that it was granted.

However, if the danger they ran of the Captain's displeasure, could not deter them, it may easily be imagined that neither Charles' remonstrance nor good example, would have any better effect. Away they went to see the saw-mills, Charles remaining quietly on the allotted

space of beach, walking to and fro, and deeply engaged in thinking on a certain lady, whose name it would be quite superfluous to mention.

The 'Tartar' lying at anchor only a short distance off, formed a beautiful object on which the eye could rest, while the fancy indulged in those dreams which were perhaps destined never to be realized. Visions of glory, the enticing hallucinations of ambition, and the still more delicious and fond reveries of love, occupied his soul by turns; and in justice to him we must also say, that gratitude for the past unexpected, and as most fully acknowledged, undeserved promotion, was a very prominent feeling in his bosom.

While thus occupied, and steadily observing his duty, the other lads proceeded to follow their wishes, and having gone up to the saw-mills in question, which, from their curious machinery, were well worth the inspection, they found an old man in care of the premises, and attending to the works, which were very simple. Having first procured the attendant's services, they proceeded to go over the estab-

lishment, and enlighten themselves as to the process by which the timber was manufactured into planks.

With the advantage of a full stream of water which ran down the creek, and descended to the sea, the mill, by means of a large undershot wheel, was driven with considerable power. The machinery consisted of a number of sliding frames with four saws at the end of each. The saws being stationary in one sense, though not in another, that is to say, they were kept playing up and down with a sawing motion, but at one spot; while the sliding frames gradually moved under them. The logs of timber were then placed upon the frames, and the whole being set in motion, the log was gradually driven against the saws, which by this process cut up into four planks the enormous mass of timber.

After going round the whole establishment, the midshipmen suggested to the old fellow in charge whether he could not possibly find it in his heart to approve of something to drink.

In those days of non-teetotalism the difficulty

would have been to find an Irishman to have said nay to such a proposition. In the present case, nothing could be further from the notions of the proposee than any such unkind refusal of his young friend's desires.

Paddy had not only no sort of objection to have something to drink, but he so felt for their honours' wants, that he was perfectly ready to go any distance to get it. He had some in the house last night, though to be sure it came in late, but somehow or another, the heat of the weather had evaporated the whole of it during the hours of darkness. Barney Moloney would certainly be coming to relieve him in charge of the mill about six o'clock, but as their honours might not be able perhaps to wait till then, why, he himself would run down to the town, which was only a step of two miles off or so, and get all they wanted—if they would only give him the money; and as to the mill, it was such a beautiful simple creature, it wanted scarcely any troubling after at all; for if they would only look to this, and see to the other thing, and mind the third, look sharp that the water

did not come too fast, and put on this stopper and pull that rod, and shut that valve,—the whole affair would go on as right as nine pence!

"Oh! Paddy," said the midshipman, "nothing on earth can be more simple! so here's a golden half-guinea, get all the drink you can with it, and be sure and get it strong, Paddy, and be back as soon as you like."

This was rather a general licence, and without asserting that Paddy had made up his mind to get drunk first, and then to return to his friends, as soon as he might be sufficiently sober, we do venture to insinuate, that there was some danger of such a result being so accomplished. However, off he set, leaving the mill in the care of the midshipmen.

A venerable hen confiding her chickens to the sagacious proprietor of the bushy tail, so extensively hunted by country squires, would have acted with comparative prudence, if named in the same breath with Paddy. The first thing the youngsters did when they found themselves masters of the mill, was to inquire gently

among themselves, "what lark they should be up to?" In answer to this self-inquiry it was proposed to rummage Paddy's hold from top to bottom.

This plan was much relished, and being instantly adopted, in the course of a quarter-of-an-hour, there was no place unsecured with a lock, into which the young inquisitors had not pryed. Not only were they able to say where the general requisites of the mill were kept, but could have informed Master Paddy of the exact number of waistcoats and coats in his wardrobe, cold potatoes and pork in his larder, and empty broken bottles in his cellar. Still this made up for a very small portion of the time they had to wait, and the question next arose what till Paddy's return were they to do?

Having gone back into the rooms where the saws were working, one of them admiringly remarked what a beautiful punishment it would be, if criminals were lashed to such a log of wood as they then saw lying there, and in that position gradually left to be sawn through by the four saws.

One and all agreed that this would certainly be what they termed a most crack mode of dealing with offenders; this ingenious proposition being admitted, there next followed the natural midshipman's corollary in the shape of a proposal by a bullying, fat-headed animal of the name of Jones—for your Jones's are always in some scrape!—to this effect—

"I vote we take young Coxcomb, and pay him off, for trying to pin us down to the beach, by lashing him on the further end of this log, and making him wait there till his head comes within four or five inches of the saws, then cutting his lashings, and letting him go."

"Nonsense, Jones," replied the youngster, "what folly you talk, as if I should ever permit myself to be placed in such a dangerous position as that for your amusement!"

"Ho! ho! Master Game-cock, if you talk of not permitting it, why of course we will do the matter directly, and as to danger, you little fool, what danger can there be when the log is so long? it will take nearly an hour to saw it through."

"Well, I don't choose it," was the answer immediately made; and young Coxcomb endeavoured to follow it out by moving away.

"Come, come, little sneak, you are not going to get out of it that way," replied Jones, placing himself in the path of the poor boy, who knowing how much and unjustly some of his companions disliked him, was really in a great state of terror, as to having his life placed in any such wanton and most unnecessary danger; he therefore prudently meditated getting away down to the boat, for he knew that when once under the protection of Charles, the latter would allow no one to molest him.

Jones, however, seemed to be aware of his intentions, and being infinitely the strongest of the party, at once frustrated all the youngster's hopes of escape in the way we have described.

"Come, come, Jones," said the boy, whose fears were considerably increased at being thus cut off; "I tell you, I won't be played the fool with by you: if you consider there is no danger, try how you like it yourself."

"Oh! no, my dear Coxcomb, I could not possibly think of interfering with your privileges; I am not an only son, you know Coxcomb, nor yet my mother's darling, nor am I my father's spy, you know, Coxcomb, nor yet an embryo baronet, and therefore there is no value set upon my life compared with yours; the service, you see, would not lose anything by my death, because you see I am not what they call a future admiral; there are loads of us, nine of us in family, my boy! The stock of the Jones's is like the seed of Isaac without number."

"Or respect, master Jones, you may add," returned his victim, struggling hard to get away.

"Oh! you are getting saucy are you, Sir?" quoth Jones. "Ah! I see we must bind you to the log, or else you will never have a proper respect for your senior officers until you are enabled to form some sort of a notion what true punishment really is."

Wherever torture is to be inflicted, the young have unfortunately far too ready a taste for its

horrors; at this juncture, one or two of the other midshipmen joined in support of Jones, by observing,

"Oh! yes, it is right the darling boy who never keeps any watches, but those he likes, whom the first lieutenant can only venture to punish by asking him to dinner, and who never knows what the taste of salt-junk is, because he always dines in the cabin with his rich papa, it is right *he* should have some sort of a notion of what punishment is."

"Oh! yes," added a third, "Little Luxury," as they nick-named young Coxcomb, "certainly ought to know what it is to have a brush of the sours as well as the sweets; he is the only one in the ship who can get on shore whenever he likes, and therefore, I certainly vote that he is put upon the log for a quarter of an hour, at least."

"I think it very ungrateful of you," said Coxcomb, "after having asked my father for a boat for you, that you should all thus set upon, and leave me in this way; it is not a likely mode I can assure you to get me to ask for a boat again."

"Oh! now you begin to bully us, little Coxcomb, it is quite clear you must take your place upon the log, for ten minutes at the shortest, so you had better make your mind up to do it with a good grace, for the longer you stay, the nearer the saws will come to the end, so the greater the danger; so as you must do it at last, you had better do it at first."

"I tell you, I will do nothing of the sort, Jones, let me go directly, or I will complain to my father of the whole of you."

"Oh! dear," shouted the bevy of his tormentors, as soon as he had got out this unlucky exclamation, and instantly surrounding him, they added, "Now, Coxcomb, you know you dared us to it, we are bound to lash you down, whether or no."

"And if you don't submit to it with good grace," added Jones, "we will not only lash you down, but run away and leave you afterwards; whereas, if you submit to it properly, with good nature, as every messmate ought in a lark like this, I promise I will take a turn next, and we won't keep you down three minutes; besides,

you see you shall be lashed at the far end, and it must be at least twenty minutes before that comes to the saw, even after all the time we have lost in talking."

"Come now, there's a good fellow, don't make such a fuss about a trifle, we don't mean to harm you, it is only a lark; don't be such a mammy sick muff, but learn to have a little pluck in you, like other people."

"Oh! no, Jones, I really cannot, it is running too great a risk for no purpose."

"As to the risk that you shall run, whether you like or not, Master Coddle, the only question is, whether you will do it with your own good will, and be taken off directly, or have it done against your will, and the whole of us run away and leave you."

"At any rate, I think it is exceedingly cruel in you all, knowing how much I dislike it; but if you will swear to let me up directly I ask you,—why, I will submit."

"Of course, we will swear to it," said Jones, "why you don't think we are such savages as to mean you any harm, when I tell you, that

when you get off, I will be lashed down myself."

"Oh! as to that, you need not take any trouble, it is no pleasure to me to see any one in either pain or danger, and no man can be placed in such a frightful position as that without feeling both."

"Oh! you are such a soft fellow; give us your arm," answered Jones, taking out a silk pocket handkerchief, and strapping the other down to the dangerous log, while it continued slowly but surely to advance towards the fatal saws.

"That's a good fellow," said Jones, when he had bound the youngster's arms round his body, and then, with another handkerchief, secured his body to the timber.

"Now Chesseldon, you attend to his feet, will you?" directing the attention of another to the work of cruelty, which was rapidly completed, by each one contributing his silk handkerchief, until the Captain's son was as completely bound to the log as if he had himself been formed of heart of oak, instead of the

surrounding heartless and unfeeling little wretches, being far more likely to come up to such a description.

As if all that had hitherto been done was not sufficient to satiate their love of persecution, Jones, in spite of the remonstrance of the passive boy, disengaged from his throat his black silk cravat, and with it formed an additional band which he passed round young Coxcomb's neck, and so bound him to the timber by this most sensitive and dangerous part of the body.

"For God's sake, Jones," implored the little fellow, "don't put any lashing round my throat; I shan't be able to move or breathe," endeavouring to lift his head up, and remonstrate.

"Psha! you little fool," was Jones's feeling reply, "it is quite clear you don't know what's good for you:" and instantly proceeding in his intention, before the other could avert it, the kerchief was passed round the neck, and this part of the body like the rest was firmly secured, beyond all moving.

"Now, my boys, now's our time, we have

got him firmly fixed stem and stern, with head on to the saws; so now let's make sail for the boat, and tell dear mammy how pleasantly we have left her darling to be minced up for sausage meat."

"Cockey, my boy, as soon as you are cut up into junk, drop us a line, and let us know, that we may come on shore, and add a little salt to your remains, and get you ready by pickling, for serving out to the ship's company."

"Good bye, little Cockey," sung out the rest of these thoughtless lads, and taking to their heels as fast as they could, they not only ran out of the room where they had thus inhumanly left their young messmate exposed to the most cruel death, but for fear any portion of his sufferings should be spared him, the whole troop pursued their route, past the very window where they had left their Captain's son thus in peril, on their way down to the boat. Impressing upon his mind as firmly as it was possible to do, the belief that they had actually left him to his frightful fate, very quietly to return on board the ship.

Still the boy, being naturally of a courageous disposition, with a strong effort of mind repelled the first emotions of fear, and persuaded himself that his companions had only made a pretended flight in order to put his spirit to the test, and after giving one or two faint calls, and vainly endeavouring to raise his head, at the expence of being suffocated, he was ultimately obliged to content himself with lying down in his horrible position, with a perturbation of mind which can only be conceived by those who have suffered in their dreams under the various positions of death and danger which a disordered imagination calls forth.

In truth the whole accompaniments of time and place, were almost too frightful and horrible for anything but a dream to present. The stillness of the room itself, after the late clatter of young voices; now interrupted only by the ceaseless screeching of the saws, which might soon be tearing his flesh into innumerable particles, was alone enough to have appalled any ordinary heart; to this was added the numerous horrible sounds of the water, rushing in an

enormous volume down the heavy fall that led to the mill wheel; the continual revolving of which, sounded in the ears of the helpless lad, like the ceaseless advance of some destroying enemy, while ever and anon, as the building quivered beneath the power of the heavy machinery, the young lad fancied that the river was coming down in still greater strength and volume, and the saws seemed to screech with an additional anticipatory delight at the fast approaching death, while the log on which he was bound trembled perceptibly beneath each blow that it received, a matter he had not remarked while his companions were standing by, and his attention was engaged by other matters; he could also plainly perceive, as he laid supine with his face fixed towards the ceiling, the progress the log made, as it was gradually moved on by the machinery towards the teeth of the saw.

For some time he laid perfectly still, with his heart palpitating so loudly, as to be audible even amid all the clangours of the place.

Expecting his companions would momentarily return, five minutes stole away, they seemed to him an endless age of torment, though at the same time, they appeared to fly too quickly, since they brought him each second nearer to the place of execution, by a death so awful, that even yet he could scarcely contemplate the possibility of his having to undergo it; surely they could only mean it as a joke, they must be hiding somewhere close at hand, even although he should be unable to hear them, perhaps they might be actually in the room, watching to see how his courage would bear the ordeal it was undergoing.

Impressed with this belief, and anxious to induce them, by shewing that he know the joke to terminate it, he here called out:—

"Jones, my dear fellow, do let me up now, it is past the time you promised, I am sure you can't want to keep me here any longer; remember, if I should unfortunately get too near the saws before you can loose the lashings, how terribly they will cut me, and if my father

finds it out, we shall all lose our leave, and get otherwise punished for leaving the shore!"

To this appeal of course there came no answer, since no one was within its hearing. The mourner waited for a little time, and still fully impressed with the belief that his companions were close at hand—in fact, incredulous of the possibility of their behaving with such cold-blooded brutality, as to leave him placed in such imminent peril, by their mischievous and unheard-of love of joking; he once more appealed to their consideration, in accents that few could have heard under the singular circumstances of the case, without rushing to fulfil the request so made.—

"Dear Jones, I know you are standing by laughing at me, but do let me up if you please, I feel so ill; you can't tell how sick and dizzy I am growing."

Still no answer was returned, and now beginning to grow desperately frightened, the unfortunate captive endeavoured to raise his head slightly and look round.

In an instant, however, he was most painfully

reminded of his bonds, by the tightening of the handkerchief round his neck, in a manner that compelled him to resume his former helpless position, or undergo the penalty of suffocation.

So frightfully near had his head now approached the saws, that he could actually feel playing amongst his hair the additional current of wind which they raised in their destroying progress, as they plunged up and down with frightful velocity, tearing their way through the heavy timber on which the youth was placed like some infuriated fiends, anxious to overcome all obstacles that stood between them and their prey.

To the sufferer's excited imagination, it seemed as if the ingenuity and wickedness of man, had exorcised a demon, that it was utterly beyond his power to control; he could now plainly distinguish by its effect upon his own person every motion of the saws, they seemed to him growing more horribly powerful, at every descent the screeching became more shrill and terrible in his ears, the stream appeared

to fall in still increasing strength and velocity.—At every plunge which the jagging instruments made, he expected to feel their sharp remorseless points piercing through his skull and brain, and with one dreadful pang, terminating life, and hope, and fear together. With a convulsive effort, which alas! only made matters worse, he strove vehemently to escape, but he had allowed himself to be secured far too firmly by a species of fastening that no human strength could break, and while from these terrific throes his face grew dark with strangulation, and his sense of suffering augmented to a pitch beyond all calculation, the only point that he gained in his affliction, was the becoming more powerless and exhausted. Although breath sufficient was now scarcely left him, he began to implore, in all the most touching terms he could employ, the supposed witnesses of his agony to relent in their cruelty, and desist from their fiendish enjoyment; one by one he called on each individual by name to release him, in the most beseeching

terms; at last a sudden twitching of his hair inflicted on his mind the horrible belief that the saws had already reached his skull.

The natural tendency of the human mind, under such deplorable circumstances, was to exert the last remaining powers of life in effecting an escape:—but over the frightful writhings of the victim let us draw a veil, while we refer to those guilty little wretches who had dared, for their selfish gratification, to make so horrible an experiment.

It is almost incredible, that human creatures, however young and thoughtless, however much accustomed to scenes of force and brutality, should be able to bring themselves to the infliction of such complete torture. But so it was, and no sooner were Jones and his companions satisfied of the impossibility of young Coxcomb's escape, than without giving the slightest further consideration to the consequences, or troubling themselves to enquire in the least degree, what was the amount of agony their enjoyment would produce, even if unattended with any accident, no very certain matter, these lads coolly resolved to heighten to the utmost, the sufferings of

"mamma's darling," as they called him, simply because he happened to be reserved from some of their own privations, and they possessed the undoubted power of tyrannizing over him at will.

With these views, Jones who, to a certain degree, set the example among them from the possession of greater power, rushed outside the building, and instead of going down to the boat, where he thought Charles might enquire for the missing youngster, and would, he felt assured, as immediately release him on hearing how he had been left, the ill destiny of the young tyrant led him from this safe and happy interruption of his detestable folly to take a walk, further on towards the town, with a view of seeing if they could light upon their returning messenger.

The devil, who, according to the anabaptists and other strong spiced sects, is perfectly competent, as gamesters phrase it, to make his own game in the right time and place, seldom loses an opportunity of throwing a most fitting temptation in the paths of all those who rush

into unnecessary danger. So it was on this occasion, scarcely had Jones and the other midshipmen proceeded beyond the gates of the mill wall, when they met three bare-legged, but pretty Irish peasants, proceeding along the high road.

No youngster, just let loose from a man-of-war, whatever his name, station, or degree, could have been expected to pass by such an opportunity of a little rational conversation.

No sooner, therefore, did the midshipmen see the pretty peasants, aforesaid, than they drew up rank and file across the road, and insisted on the embargo of a kiss, before any of the detained craft should pass.

The right of this toll, however, it seems that these ladies in question did not exactly comprehend, and not only denied the authority of the statute in such case made and provided, but plainly intimated their resolution of obstructing all and singular, who should attempt to carry into effect its osculatory provisions. We have already seen that Jones was not nice in his notions of the exact extent to which force might

be applied—few of the Jones's are—and at once gave orders to his juniors to single out the enemy's ships, and engage.

Irish women have a notion of their own, on these points, more decided than even those of the daughters of the dominant isle, and instantly repelling force by force, a regular scuffle ensued.

As a natural consequence the toll certainly was levied, again and again, but some severe blows were inflicted by the ladies, on the well deserving ears of their assailants, and in the progress of this mutual good will so completely was the attention of these heedless boys absorbed, that the fate of the unfortunate young Coxcomb was entirely forgotten.

Perhaps there are among our readers, some few who may be cognizant of the fact, that to those engaged in the amorous sports we have described, old Time goes rather briskly on the wing.

Although this is undoubtedly so, and although the brilliant hours he thus brushes away from us in the seemingly short clothes of minutes, are equally long and lingering, when moralised

amid our sighs and tears, still it was to have been hoped that Jones would at last have remembered the dreadful position in which he had left his messmate, and consequently himself, had not the evil destiny of all the culprits been augmented by the watchfulness of one who would have died to have saved from the slightest harm, the golden locks, among whose glossy tangles the icy breath of approaching death was playing.

This last was no less a person than his father Sir Henry. Ever ceaseless in his vigilance, the lynx-eyed baronet, well knowing the propensity of all midshipmen to break through orders, and jealous in the extreme to ascertain whom he could trust as obedient, and whom not,—he no sooner saw his midshipmen land upon the shore, than making use of his constant companion, the spy glass, he kept up from time to time the most marked recognizance on all their actions. His eye was upon them at the very time Jones was pointing to the mills, and proclaiming his intention of visiting them. He saw his son lingering behind, and the angry gestures of the

other, as he urged him to break through his father's orders; he saw our hero walk determinedly apart from all the rest, resolved to have no communion in their error, but to indulge himself in the delightful reveries of love and ambition.

All this Sir Henry witnessed, and in his own mind he had already apportioned out to the delinquent Jones, no slight or insufficient punishment for his offence. He had also congratulated himself in no small degree, on the knowledge of character shewn in the promotion of our hero to the quarter deck, believing, as he had done at the time, that the choice was one which would do honour to his penetration.

Still, as the opportunity was now at hand, of the most full and fair ordeal of our hero's faith, Sir Henry was determined not to mitigate it by any hasty decision on its stability. It was yet quite possible that the temptation might still prove too strong for resistance, and Charles join the rest of the absentees in their forbidden enjoyment of wandering beyond the given boundary. The fact of his own son being

among the criminals, seemed apparently to give him very slight uneasiness. Whether he despaired of ever making his son a smart officer, or considered him a privileged junior, or one given up to a mother's spoiling, we know not, nor is it material to inquire.

For a considerable time he continued his surveillance of Charles, the solitary boat-keeper, as he walked up and down, or gathered shells, or sat upon a rock, or followed one of the thousand and one amusements to kill time common to all idlers upon the sea-shore.

Like some fond husband who fears, yet doats, suspects, and yet believes, Sir Henry unceasingly continued to gaze at our hero, almost thinking it impossible that he should remain true, and yet feeling that he should be considerably humbled by his own wrong estimate of humanity if he did not.

At last, when he perceived that Charles remained firm as a rock in the execution of his duty, he resigned all further apprehension as to his integrity, and giving orders to have his boat manned, on that side of the ship which was

furthest from the sight of the youngsters, so much so indeed that the whole hull was interposed between them, he determined to row by a circuitous route, to the spot where they had bathed, and ascertain what was the attraction and employment of the fugitives.

CHAPTER V.

WELL, indeed, was it for Charles, that Sir Henry had used such extreme vigilance on this occasion, as the former might otherwise never have been enabled exactly to establish the facts as they really occurred. As it was, there remained little to come under Sir Henry's knowledge, and of all that did remain, he was qualified to afford himself the most complete corroboration.

Descending quickly to his boat, and giving the brief command, "Pull quickly,"—a hint which those to whom it was addressed understood much too well to tamper with, the Baronet first steered a-head of the Tartar, paused for a moment on her bows, as if to examine the appearance of his ship, as all naval men, who are in no very great hurry, usually do,—and then darted away towards the

city at the head of the harbour, and when he imagined he had completely lulled the watchfulness of any of the transgressing youngsters who might have seen him depart, be brought round, in the opposite direction, the wedge-like bow of his boat, and directed her whole speed for the spot where his midshipmen had landed.

The seamen put forth all their strength on their oars, until the gig seemed almost to fly along the surface of the water.

Deeply engaged in his day-dreams as Charles had been, still his young eyes quickly detected, some considerable distance further off than the Baronet had intended, Sir Henry's singular figure dressed in plain clothes as it was, to elude observation.

In an instant the whole truth flashed before him. He was utterly at a loss how to act for the best, when he glanced at the numerous considerations that forced themselves upon his notice. To leave the shore and run up to his companions would, he well knew, be looked upon as a most direct breach of orders; since the very essence of Sir Henry's discipline gave

the preference, if possible, rather to the letter than the spirit of obedience; again he felt convinced that Sir Henry's object in landing was to catch the culprits in the act; it was a trick so like him, that it at once spoke the fatality of his being caught in warning his messmates; such a course could not fail to be a deadly offence: on the other hand, to remain still and allow the Captain to catch the midshipmen, would be a line of action most infallibly taken by all on board as proof positive, that he, as was broadly asserted, was nothing more nor less than a spy of Sir Henry's intended to play the second part of the 'darling,' as they called his son.

On the one side, he might for ever ruin those prospects which now beamed so brightly; on the other, he might render himself extremely uncomfortable in his berth, and forfeit that good opinion he was so anxious to gain and maintain among his messmates; and yet how else could he follow the more wise, but certainly the more selfish part of preferring his own interest to theirs? After all, reasoned he, it is very hard they should pull me into this scrape,

when I did every thing I could to prevent their taking so foolish a step?

After a moment's reflection, however, he adopted the more generous line of action, and stealing round behind a rock that concealed his figure, he placed his hand to his lips, so as to confine the sound, and shouted in a shrill but not loud voice, 'The Captain is coming.' Fortunately for Charles, the wind was dead on shore, and therefore no part of this effort to defeat his purpose reached the ears of Sir Henry, while, on the other hand, those magic words had almost power sufficient to rouse a midshipman from the slumber of the grave.

In the present case, absorbed as the young gentlemen were in their amusements, and engrossed with all the excitements of kissing, and being scratched; there was not one among them who did not instantly recognize that faint but effective cry, and dart off to the boat with infinitely greater zeal, than ever actuated Crusaders when crowding in obedience to the summons, "Saint George to the rescue." No sooner were the words heard by one,

than they were caught up and repeated from mouth to mouth, as ladies or Londoners may echo 'fire,' while the enfranchised peasants, wondering to what they owed their sudden liberation, fled off in one direction, and the youngsters scampered pell mell in the other. They had not proceeded many steps before they came in sight of the sea, and there, grim and terrible as need be, they saw their dreaded commander sitting upright in the stern sheets of his boat, his glance seemingly fixed on shore where they ought to be, and his men pulling with a degree of desperation, that sufficiently indicated to their guilty conscience the real object of his visit. If Sir Henry's unfortunate son ever had possessed the slightest chance of being remembered in time to save his life, after the women had been disposed of, every effort at recollecting him was banished from the minds of his persecutors by the danger which his father's approach now placed them in. Without a single thought, except as to how they should gain the boat before Sir Henry could land, and in what manner they could best sneak back

to the beach without his detecting their return, the whole number of the midshipmen, Jones at their head, scampered heedlessly forward, following a circuitous path which led to the shore, and from being partly protected on one side by the brow of the hill intervening between it and the sea, this enabled them, as they thought, by crouching down, to obtain their object without being detected by Sir Henry.

They were as much deceived as any young men need well have been, the Vampire had his eye fixed upon them from the very moment that the first head came in sight, and simply concluding that the absentees had put one of their party as centinel, to watch the proceedings on board the Tartar, he bestowed a sickly smile upon their attempts to evade him, and continued his course for their boat.

In the mean while, Charles, as soon as he had sounded his note of warning, quietly resumed his thoughtful walk, thus momentarily interrupted, and indeed taking his seat, when in full sight of Sir Henry, upon the beach near the cutter, pretended perfect ignorance of his

superior's approach, until the sounding oars warned him to rise, and simulate as much respect as he could well get up to welcome the approach of the great functionary.

What he most dreaded was any preliminary hail from the latter, enquiring into the whereabout of his (Charles's) companions, but Sir Henry was already better acquainted with this fact than Charles himself, and was moreover considerably taken up with considering what punishment he should award them.

We may suppose therefore that this opportunity of trying Charles's fidelity escaped a remembrance, otherwise fertile in such causes of another's pain.

The Captain's gig had already approached within fifty yards of the cutter, when flushed from running, and breathless from speed, the worthy Jones presented himself round the angle of rock, with all his late companions following in Falstaff's order at his heels; it must be confessed that at this moment Charles's breast was not insensible to that proud and honourable feeling, which even the best of us might be forgiven,

for entertaining at a similar moment, when all the pain of a sacrifice was thus fully rewarded by thus showing the excellence of rigidly following the path of duty, in preference to the more alluring ways of pleasure. It was not that our hero felt one atom less for the sufferings of those, who had thus placed themselves in such a dilemma, but laying his hand upon his bosom, he there pressed closer to his heart the beloved and golden talisman of her, for whose sake he proudly felt every sacrifice would be a pleasure, and the sternest duty delight; as he watched his comrades creeping round to the post they ought never to have deserted, the idea just crossed him, that if any unfortunate wight among the whole number should have failed to hear his warning summons, on such a sad absentee would fall, in all probability, if not the whole, at least a double share of Sir Henry's most heavy indignation.

One by one he counted them all, as they appeared, and all were there except one, whose absence certainly struck him as strange, from the quiet and obedient habits of the youth;

though from the potency of his connexion in saving him from harm, his was undoubtedly an absence of the least importance; Sir Henry's only son, perhaps relying upon his relationship, a matter by the way he generally avoided, might without care, have lingered by the way: second after second passed, but still he came not, the last of the runners had joined the little circle near him, certainly all panting and out of breath, and Charles eagerly looked round the projecting rock, but past its rugged points no further wanderer hastened; already the harsh unmusical voice of his father had given the command, 'in with the bow oar,'—in another minute he would be standing among them, and the absence of his only child would of course be the first matter to meet his anxious attention and enquiry.

"Where is Reginald?" instantly demanded Charles of the assembled group, as these thoughts flashed across his mind.

"Good God!!"—exclaimed two or three of the boys together, while the horror and astonishment that burst forth on the pale features of

all, formed a picture, whose intensity no after occurrences could banish from Charles' remembrance, "he is murdered! he is dead! he must be killed! Save him, save him!" and other similar exclamations of affright, burst from the remorseful lips of all the little wretches gathered round him; while Jones, the chief culprit, from whose remembrance as well as that of the rest, his fate had been banished up to that very moment, was, like all of his bullying species, so frightened by the ills that now impended over himself, that the utmost effort of his will only enabled him to make a faint effort in speaking, which the agitation of his mind converted into a silent expansion of the mouth, while the muscles of the jaw appeared to have lost the power of closing!

"What has happened,—where in the name of Fortune is he?" demanded Charles, who saw the necessity of instant vigour in flying to his assistance, for that Reginald was in great and imminent peril he could entertain no doubt.

"Where is he?" furiously demanded our hero, "Speak, you fools! can none of you tell me?

what have you been doing to him, where did you leave him?"

"In the mill room,—the large room where the saws are working."

At this moment three or four terrific screams were heard, so powerful and so thrilling in their tone, they seemed to pierce through the soul of every one who listened to them.

Charles in an instant darted off to the spot from whence they came, while, as he was going, the midshipman who last answered him had the presence of mind to slip into his hand a large open clasp knife.

Although our hero was utterly unable to divine for what purpose this might be intended, yet, taking it as a matter of course that such an instrument would be necessary, he seized it in his right hand and bounded forward to the mill.

At this period the father's boat had just struck the shore. Sir Henry's eye immediately caught sight of our hero breaking through his Captain's orders in quitting the

shore, and though it struck him as singular that this should be done before his eyes, yet the impulse of the strict disciplinarian prevailed over every other feeling, and he instantly called out "Where are you going Sir? Stop."

At that dreaded sound, that might convey the sentence of death to its utterer's only child, Charles's limbs seemed mechanically to obey the dangerous command. Halting in his pace, and instantly facing round, Charles lifted up his hands as if imploring pardon for the breach of orders, and shouted back, "I go to save your son, Sir!" and having paid this deference to the letter of Sir Henry's orders, he once more resumed his original course, and darted towards the buildings, whence shriek upon shriek of prolonged agony rang forth incessantly. He was soon out of sight from the boat.

Certified in those indistinct fears for his son's safety which had first arisen from his absence, and the previous conduct of his messmates, Sir Henry now leaped into the water in his haste, inquiring of the youngsters, who

dispersed like scared sheep at his approach, "Where is my son?"

Without giving any direct answer, the terrified boys all shouted forth, "The mill! the mill! Sir."

Sir Henry did not wait for any further information, that brief reply suggested images sufficiently horrible to have quickened to the utmost any parent's footsteps, and fully expecting to find Reginald entangled in the machinery, he followed in the footsteps of Charles, dashing forward with all the fleetness his light figure could command.

Although without a guide our hero had been at no loss to discover where the object of his rescue lay; one continued peal of screaming, intense and horrible as it is possible to conceive, led him quickly to the spot.

He had no period for wonder, and scarcely time for thought, but when the spectacle presented by Reginald's person met his eye—he knew not whether to believe himself breathing and alive, a rightly seeing person in an actual world, or one labouring under a delusion!

The boy was bound as of course the reader already knows, to the log of wood that was gradually passing under the saws, but from the frightful efforts the helpless and unhappy youth had made to escape, the various ligatures had been pressed so tight upon the limbs, that the impeded circulation had swollen them to an incredible extent, while the worst and most fatal, that around the neck, had slightly been dragged from its place, and the head, to avoid the death at hand, was bent most painfully forward upon the chest, the face being livid nearly to blackness with the strangulation thus caused. The eyes were starting almost out of his head, the delicate features of youth blackened as they were had become puffed out beyond all recognition, the lips were agonized by a frightful expression of pain, and the tongue could scarcely give utterance to those yells of torture that had guided Charles to the spot; while worse than all, there leapt and danced the horrible phalanx of saws, as if knowing and therefore rejoicing the more at the unusual character of the prey they were about to destroy. Already

they were tinctured with the blood of their victim, but luckily as Charles arrived on the spot, the sharp teeth made only the first incision on the scalp of the bound victim ;—a few more seconds and no power on earth could have prevented them from crashing through bone and brain, and the frightful tragedy would have been over.

Instantly thrusting his left hand behind Reginald's head so that the latter must protect it from the teeth of the saw at the expense of our hero's own flesh, the motion of course completed the strangulation of the sufferer, and while his voice became gradually extinguished in the dying scream of suffocation, Charles thus got an opportunity of cutting the silk handkerchief that bound the throat, raised the body up as much as possible, though not without getting two or three severe wounds himself in the arms and shoulders, and once being very nearly dragged into the machinery by the tough fibres of his jacket.

Charles succeeded in next severing the band that confined the chest, and that which tied the arms, and thus enabled himself to pull

Reginald forward, though still insensible, into a sitting position, where, for the next few minutes, he was at any rate safe from further danger; still the task of supporting him, while his head rolled from side to side, utterly inanimate, purple and bleeding, was no pleasant task, more especially while Charles was agitated by the fear that he was beyond recovery; and if, by any accident, the helpless body should fall back before he could cut the other lashing, certain death would ensue, from the saws that so remorselessly seemed advancing to complete their ruthless work; in this dilemma, some one rushed up to the spot, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the wounded boy, Charles looked up—there stood —the horror-stricken father!

CHAPTER VI.

I was clear, from the change that came over the features of Sir Henry, that he believed his son was dead, for as the impression appeared to form in his mind, so all reason seemed to leave it. Relinquishing his hold upon his son, while a demoniacal expression of rage gathered in his features, Sir Henry put his hand to his side, as if feeling for his sword; the recollection then appeared to come over him, that he was in plain clothes, and seizing up a hatchet, our hero naturally concluded that he was about to complete the liberation of his son.

We may judge, then, of Charles's astonishment, when Sir Henry, making a motion as if about to dash out Charles's brains, demanded, with all the ferocity of a lunatic, "Hellish scoundrel! did you know of this?"

"No, on my soul, not one word till you saw the youngsters come down to the beach, and I saw your son was absent. I have never left the boat, and knew not what they were about."

"True! True! I remember all now, you could not,"—and dashing down the hatchet, and clasping his hands, in the wildest manner, he exclaimed,

"O! Great God, have I done all for this? have I done all, and suffered all, to see the object thus?"

These wild words, and if possible the still wilder manner, struck Charles as being singularly strange, and indeed almost inexplicable, but seeing the necessity of exertion before despair, as the machinery kept plunging and advancing on, and while two more lashings still bound Reginald to the plank, it occurred to our hero, that the father by thus despairing might have mistaken the amount of injury inflicted, and thought all was over.

Interrupting, therefore, his distracted and frenzied manner, as he paced to and fro, beating his temples, uttering the most fearful

imprecations on the authors of the outrage, Charles called to him, "Unless, Sir Henry, you wish to see your son die before you, come and cut away the handkerchiefs, while I hold him up from the saws."

"Dying! is he not dead?" demanded Sir Henry, starting like a dreamer from his sleep, at the bare mention of such hope; "Ah! no, he must be dead, murdered, literally murdered!"—and Sir Henry stood wringing his hands, as if, in the extremity of his anguish, still anxious to save his pride the exposure of those burning tears now starting on his eye-lids! But the effort was vain, the surcharged fountains overflowed for once, and the scalding evidences of his grief rushed over the furrowed cheeks, that had been dried for years.

"See, Sir, he breathes once more," cried Charles, pretending to take no notice of Sir Henry's anguish, "here is my knife, loosen him from this horrible position, and I will carry him out gently into the open air, while you go down to the boat, and order up a couple of hands to bear him down, ready to be taken on board."

Taking the knife from Charles's hand without further word, Sir Henry complied with our hero's suggestion, and the lashing being cut they both assisted in bearing the injured boy beyond the precincts of the mill, and laid him tenderly upon the grass, where the fresh breeze sweeping from the sea, played gratefully among those golden locks which the teeth of the frightful steel had so lately dabbled over with blood; kneeling gently by the boy's side, the agonized father remained for several seconds smoothing away the hair from Reginald's forehead, and anxiously watching the symptoms of returning existence; the face had already lost that deadly leaden colour which marked it when first rescued from destruction, and was now rapidly returning to the hues of life, a long drawn moan at last burst from the troubled breast of their young patient, a faintly drawn sigh and a convulsive twitching round the lips, seemed to show that nature was making a strong effort for reanimation. As Sir Henry remained bending over the boy's form, and muttering some indistinct words, Charles

could see the large bright tears falling upon the still swollen cheek, and presently throwing himself upon the ground beside him, and gently lifting his son's chest and head upon his own lap, so as to support it in a more easy position, Sir Henry eagerly imprinted four or five kisses upon the child's forehead, with all the tenderness and devotion of a woman. There was something so sacred in this exhibition of the real workings of a parent's heart, that Charles felt it a sort of profanity to remain looking on; drawing aside therefore, that he might not interrupt, or play the spy upon Sir Henry's motions, he waited several minutes, until his superior, without looking round, said, in a husky voice—

"Go down and take those little wretches on board, for if I see them now I shall do them some violence; order the first Lieutenant to place them all in irons; tell the surgeon to lose no time, but come to me immediately."

CHAPTER VII.

HAVING followed with strict pursuance Sir Henry's orders, Charles returned to the beach, where he found all his messmates already seated in their boat, and the latter veered off at such a respectful distance from the shore, that the Captain, if he had rushed down in a hurry, would have been unable to get at them for at least a few minutes.

No sooner was Charles's head visible from the beach, than both seamen and midshipmen exhibited the utmost anxiety to learn what had happened; but as the latter had been silent as to the real state of the case in the mill-room, so, although feeling, as they naturally might, the most intense anxiety, they forbore to put any question to Charles until he had gained

their boat, and, having told them they were instantly to return on board, they were all out of hearing of the crew of the captain's gig.

The moment this was the case, every hand dropped from its oar, and every voice repeated the same question—"Is he dead?"

"I hope not," replied Charles, "but whether he will ever recover is a matter too difficult to be easily decided; I am sorry to say, however, that I carry orders to the first lieutenant to put you all in irons, and I very much fear that, as far as the service goes, you are all of you ruined."

"What do you think will be done to us?" demanded Jones; "turned out of the ship?"

"I am afraid there is nothing half so lucky for you in store," was the reply; a hint that was not afterwards forgotten. Our hero longed to enter into some further question of how such an atrocity had occurred; but, remembering how serious was the matter, and how little any one in the Tartar knew the full extent into which the slightest act might carry them, he thought it more prudent to remain

silent; and all the midshipmen, being, from a different motive, namely, that of absolute dejection, equally taciturn, the whole party thus arrived on board.

When the first lieutenant received the message sent him, to put the whole party in irons, he naturally enquired what had occurred; and Charles having stated what he himself had seen, the surgeon was rapidly despatched to the shore, and the midshipmen, under the guard of a corporal and marines, conveyed to the half-deck, and there, each one secured by the leg, to a long iron bar, and thick anclets of the same metal, were left to await, for their heartless frolic, the punishment which, if it ever could be deserved, certainly was well deserved by them.

In the course of an hour, the Captain and the surgeon returned with the invalid, when the frightful fact became known that the latter was rendered, in all probability, an idiot for life.

The ship, as may naturally be supposed, was in a perfect hubbub, but cordially as the Captain had made himself detested, there were

few who, on such an occasion, did not forego all minor animosities, and afford to the agonized father their fullest sympathy.

Soon after the arrival of Sir Henry on board, he sent for his clerk, and desired him to dis-rate the whole of the offenders, five in number, who then remained on the Tartar's books, simply as ship's boys.

Part of the youngsters' fate was now well known; this was clearly the prelude to flog-ging them all at the gangway.

Sir Henry then issued a written order to the first, second, and third Lieutenants, to take a written examination, first of Charles, then of the surgeon, and finally, of the five culprits themselves, if they chose to give any expla-nation of the affair, they being first cautioned, that any thing they said, would, if necessary, be made use of against them.

This tribunal having met, and the various parties to be examined having been summoned before them, Charles underwent the first ordeal; and when he had declared every thing he knew, the surgeon next stated the injuries

his patient had received; the prisoners were ultimately allowed to say any thing they had to urge in their defence.

Want of candour, at any rate, was not among their faults; and, with the exception of Jones, who endeavoured to hide his share in the affair, they all very fairly stated, what the reader already knows to have taken place. In their defence, they all solemnly protested their utter want of any intention to inflict the slightest harm upon their victim, whom they meant only to have frightened a little, and then to have set free.

As the lieutenants knew how severe was the punishment in store for them, they humanely forebore adding to their sufferings by any lectures at this time, and having paid Charles a few well-merited compliments on the propriety of his conduct throughout, the prisoners were sent back to confinement, the examination signed by all the other parties, and then transmitted to the Captain.

During that night, as a matter of course, nothing was talked of but the examination

which had taken place in the ward-room, and the probable punishment to be inflicted next morning on the culprits.

In the mean while the greatest care was paid the unhappy patient, who, so far from exhibiting any signs of returning consciousness, was now known to be in the first stage of brain fever.

As Sir Henry had given no orders that any secresy should be observed as to the result of the examination of the prisoners, so, in a matter of such general interest, none was thought necessary. When the dinner hour came the effect of the inquiry was mentioned without any disguise among the officers of the ward-room-mess, it was of course heard by their servants, and equally, as a matter of course, in another hour carried all round the ship. By these means every hand on board was enabled to judge in his own way of the various degrees of culpability of the different actors throughout the melancholy business, and every one had an opiuion not only who was most to blame, but of the various degrees

of inculpation among all the minor participators in the affair, together with the quantum of punishment which each ought to be called upon to undergo; on all hands one decision was unanimous, namely, that Jones was the ringleader, not only from his superior age, but from having urged the others on to bear an equal share in the offence. Among the culprits, moreover, were included several youngsters who were favourites among the ship's company, and two who, from the standing and position of their families in the world, would by their disgrace upon the present occasion inflict great pain on those to whom they owed any thing but such a return; meanwhile bread and water was served out to the prisoners themselves. The patient's cot had been hung up in his father's cabin; Sir Henry was seen no more that day, and with the knowledge that a heavy morrow was coming, the whole ship's company retired to rest.

A few seconds after the two o'clock bell had sounded, the sentry on the main-deck rushed up to the officer of the watch, and communicated

the startling intelligence that while he had gone forward to strike the bell, four of the prisoners had escaped from their irons, and that Mr. Jones alone was left behind with his mouth gagged.

On hearing this, the officer immediately descended in person to examine into the truth of the statement, and finding it exactly as had been represented, he instantly untied the silk handkerchief which they found bound round Jones's mouth, and asked him for an explanation of his position. His story, which was not a little singular, was to this effect:—

About 10 o'clock at night, the youngster who was next to him told him he was sure that if they remained on board it was the Captain's intention to flog the whole of them. He then asked Jones if he was willing to attempt an escape.

Jones replied that he was willing to attempt an escape if it could be managed, but that he, Jones, considered this impossible, since even if they could get their irons off, how were they to reach the shore unpossessed of any boat.

The other youngster replied by swimming, when Jones informed him if that was the only mode of escape it was one in which he, Jones, could be no sharer, as he could not swim, and he thought moreover at the distance the Tartar was lying from the shore it was utterly impossible for those who could swim to escape drowning; he was then asked if the others made the attempt whether he would remain silent, to which he replied he thought it was very hard that as they were all in the scrape he alone should be left to bear it, and refused to give an answer. Subsequently to this, he went to sleep with his back against the ship's side, and was only aroused just before the bell struck two, by feeling some one gagging his mouth and pinioning his arms and legs; he asserted that none of his companions were his assailants, for they were not so large or so strong as the person who had gagged him, and moreover he asserted that there were at least three attacking him at once. That immediately after he was thus rendered helpless and silent, the men, whoever they were, left

him, and looking round he perceived that all the other youngsters had escaped from the bilboes, as the irons are termed; on the return of the sentry he attracted his attention by making a noise, and thus gave the alarm. On hearing this account, the officer of the watch at once gave orders to the armourer to replace at the end of the irons that padlock, by forcing which the other youngsters had managed to escape; he then ordered up the master-at-arms and sergeant-of-marines to search the ship, sent a message down to the first lieutenant to say what had occurred, and went in person to make a report of the facts to Sir Henry. The latter officer seemed particularly wroth at hearing that any of the parties so deeply implicated were likely to make their escape, and coming on deck at the same moment with his first lieutenant, immediately ordered one of the cutters to be lowered and the latter officer to pull first round the ship and then slowly towards the nearest point of land, towards which he very naturally conceived it would be the interest and intention of the fugitives

to make. In the meanwhile he had up both the sentry and the prisoner Jones, and having examined them in person, but to no purpose, relative to the recent escape, he waited till the return of the first lieutenant assured him that the chase was equally futile, and thoroughly disappointed in every particular retired to bed.

Soon after breakfast on the ensuing morning, the hands were turned up for punishment, and Jones, the very picture of Despair, was brought a prisoner upon the quarter-deck by the master-at-arms.

"George Jones," said Sir Henry, "I am now going to flog you ; do not labour under any mistake as to the cause of the punishment; you have been guilty of an atrocity, which if it should unfortunately prove fatal to your victim, will certainly cost you your life at the gallows. As, however, the laws of your country are quite adequate to deal with you for that transgression, I shall leave you on that head entirely to their disposal ; as your Captain, there is another part of your conduct which I can on no account

pass over; as a mark of great favour, I allowed you and some of your companions to go on shore, on your word of honour, that you would not quit a certain space of ground; you disobeyed my orders, you neglected the remonstrance of two of your companions, and wilfully committed a breach of your duty,—for that disobedience I shall now punish you as you deserve."

On hearing this, Jones put forward every argument which fear and remorse could use and suggest, and amongst the rest, hoped that his conduct in giving the earliest possible intimation of his companions' escape on the preceding night would not be forgotten.

"No!" sarcastically answered Sir Henry, "you shall have half-a-dozen more for having formed the wish to escape."

In spite of all his tears and entreaties, the worshipful Jones was now therefore triced up, and while the surgeon stood by to see that the punishment did not exceed that degree of corporeal strength which would enable it to be borne in safety, two dozen and a half of

lashes were administered, and the culprit, more dead than alive, was cast off to reflect on the results of his own cruelty. As soon as this was over, our hero was ordered to stand forward, which he did from among the rueful midshipmen; when not less to his surprise than than that of all the ship's company, Sir Henry stepped up, and shaking him by the hand, said, "This is the second time that I have to hold you forth to my officers and crew, as an example, worthy of all imitation for good discipline; continue to conduct yourself as you have done during the short time you have been on board my ship, and I know not how you can fail in that just ambition which first prompted you to enter on board her; namely, the rising to a high station in the service, and if any effort of mine can forward an event so desirable on private as well as public grounds, I shall feel myself bound and pleased to execute it. Thus much of matters of strictly public duty. I have now to speak to you on a more private consideration; to your presence of mind and courage, I owe the only chance of life that

my son can ever enjoy, and at least the melancholy satisfaction that he did not die one of the most cruel deaths it is possible to conceive. These are great services, and I am only able to offer you at present a small reward, but I must hope in the future care of your good fortunes, somewhat more largely to return the benefits you have conferred. There is a check for five hundred pounds, and I sincerely trust it may be the forerunner of all the fortune you deserve." As Sir Henry said this, he placed a check in the hands of our blushing friend, and giving the brief order to his first Lieutenant to pipe down, swiftly withdrew to the solitude of his cabin. We know not if the trying nature of Charles' position at this moment, did not exceed in its agitation that fearful passage of his naval history, when nothing but the narrowest barrier stood between him and the wreck of every hope; then deep as his fears were, they were at any rate supported by the stern determination of invincible courage, and the truest philosophy. Now he against whom the world had hitherto seemed banded in stern

and pitiless combination, was selected to be the gazed of all gazers, the ensample and the pattern for imitation and approval; the rewarded object of that emulation which, whether it warms our bosoms either by its own original fire, or simply by its reflective light, is equally potent in exciting the strongest feelings of the soul. At first Charles knew not what to say, or how to act; he felt as if it were a matter of pain to him to know how he should direct his eyes, and on his cheeks he felt mantling, as warm and painful a radiation of the blood, as if some act of crime and disgrace had called the suffusion there; after vainly endeavouring to raise his glance from the deck, after feeling that his emotions were too potent for control, and impotently struggling to direct them on some subject within his power, his remembrance wandered quickly back to that magic oasis in the desert of the past, the gardens of Cliffville, there graceful and adorable as ever, he seemed once more to wander near the treasured form of her, who, humanly speaking, had been the bright creator of all his fresh born hopes, who, in his behalf had out of darkness

created light, and in presenting to his ambitious love an object for which to strive, had unconsciously opened that most glorious and boundless mine, which human genius or industry can work at will—the treasure of the mind. Then came the thrilling and extatic pride that, stimulated by her image, and for her sake, he had already accomplished difficulties worthy of her approbation; for their victory the deepest sense of thankfulness to heaven accompanied this thought. The lids, so long full to overflowing, could no longer support the burden resting upon them, and the tears rapidly coursed one another over his burning cheek.

"Well!" in the utmost surprise, exclaimed the first lieutenant to the surgeon at his elbow, "hang me if that youngster isn't one of the queerest hands I ever met; he first gets hold of our skipper's blind side, in such a way as no man ever managed yet, and then when he meets such good fortune, as nine hundred and ninety-nine men in a thousand pass through life without ever catching a blink of, this chap must needs welcome it with tears!"——

CHAPTER VIII.

"But tell me, my dear uncle, what makes you insist upon the mistaken fact that I want a companion at all? I do assure you no one can be more contented and happy than I am already without one, and in fact I would much rather have no such plague. They invariably turn out to be anything but what you wish or expect."

"But I do assure you, my dear girl, you are quite mistaken in this case, I admit that where there is any doubt in the matter as to the kind of person, it may be as you say, but this is not so here. This is an uncommonly respectable person."

"I hate respectable persons, they are always so stupid, like mulberry tart without quince

in it, well enough to look at, but most insipid to taste."

"Yes, yes, but this is really a very conversational girl."

"I detest conversational girls, Sir George, they are always making themselves witty, and not one person in a thousand knows how to prove witty without growing impertinent."

"Well, Lady Siberia, just as you please, only I think I know something of the world, and if I have any knowledge of character, I never saw a more well conducted young person in my life."

"Oh! the horror! Well-conducted young persons are always so slavish, I could just as soon bear to have some slimy reptile perpetually crawling about me, filthy, ugly, horrible!"

"As to ugliness allow me to tell you it is quite impossible that you should ever meet a person in such a walk of life more good looking, and you could not have a better foil for your dark beauty than so fair a girl."

"As to that, my dear uncle, good looking

people in a household always bring responsibility on the heads of it! Beauty is a gift I never desired, and the little I have of it will answer my purpose very well without any foil at all."

"Well, but you see you never will go into society; you ought not to be so much alone. My dear girl, I feel interested for your health. A fondness for unbroken solitude is about the worst and most exhausting crop that can be demanded from the human mind. You cannot, of course, have much of the society of your sex; I admit there are very few here of our own, whom I could wish you to associate with upon terms of equality, and nothing can be worse than being driven to fall back for any interchange of ideas upon your own servants, who at the best are a set of vulgar tattlers."

"You horrid creature! Why, where, in the name of goodness, my dear uncle, have you contracted your notions of that ill-fated animal, a young lady? Do you imagine any thing would seduce me into a confidential tattle with

one of my own servants? Why, that is the very strongest argument I beg to advance against this very companion, with whom you seem so determined to favour me."

As Lady Siberia said this, for she was indeed the speaker, she threw one of her beautiful arms round Sir George Auberville's neck, and patting him playfully on the cheek with the other hand, kissed him with that fond affection which many of the bravest of the brave would have risked life to excite in her bosom.

"—Tut, tut, you plaguy vexing little gypsy!—Don't think to flatter me out of my point, since you can't reason me from it. Then you absolutely won't have this poor girl at all?"

"On no terms whatever, my dear uncle; but still, if she must be companion to somebody, pray do not let me stand in the way of her promotion. Take her as companion to yourself, my dear Sir George. You who talk so feelingly of the evils of solitude, and the delights of society, would be the only person able to render a proper appreciation to such a paragon of perfection.

"Let me see, what are her accomplishments? She can smile and cozen—fetch and carry—say the smooth, and lisp the stupid—in short, play the amiable in any part, at any notice, in any house. Surely you might find some occupation for her. Let me see, in the morning there would be your shaving-water to bring—"

"Tut!—damn it—well, we won't have her, so there's an end of it. At any rate, I wish you would turn the carriage that way when you go out this morning. You women, who have every thing prosperous and blooming about you in life, can carry the intelligence of disappointment to others less fortunate, with much more stoicism than our rough hearts can boast. Just draw up, and tell her you won't have her."

There was something in this sarcasm that pierced Lady Siberia to the core.

"No, indeed, Sir George," she replied, while her dark blue eyes shot liquid fire, "indeed, I shall have nothing to do with the matter. You considered yourself at liberty to make promises in my name, without asking

my concurrence. Surely, then, if these prove disagreeable to me, and I, nevertheless, do not complain of them for your sake, you ought not to find fault with me if I decline the disagreeable task of breaking them through any other channel than your own."

"Well, I must say it is very hard that you can't put sufficient confidence in my good choice, to think the person I have so selected is worthy at least of an interview."

"You have asked me my opinion,—I have given you the truth. My duty—"

"Oh! fiddle, faddle!—Don't talk to me as if I had never met a woman before. The very fact of any thing being your duty, is quite enough to make any one of your consistent sex shun it like the devil; but if any work of real charity is to be set aside—particularly if it is to relieve any less prosperous person of your own sex—then, of course, in comes your duty in a minute. D——n all such duty, I say! hang me if I think I ever met any other."

"Ah! my dear Sir George, the extremely gentlemanlike and courteous manner in which

you naval people phrase a rebuke, quite robs it of its sting. Pray proceed, you are convincing me with a degree of rapidity you can scarcely conceive."

"Oh! yes, I dare say; as long as mere talking is the thing, you are sure to have the best of it; but a man may be forgiven some degree of anger, when he merely seeks the happiness of two people, and the party whose real duty it is most to promote the work of charity, brings forth the very pretence of duty to defeat it. My only object in proposing the matter was a desire to benefit both the orphans; and I thought you knew how ill treated the brother had been by that cobbling anti-Jacobin Master Tyler."

"To whom do you allude?" replied Lady Siberia, turning away her head under the pretence of pouring a little water upon one of the plants that stood in the window.

Sir George was, perhaps, no very great adept, as we have seen, in mastering the deep and subtle secrets of a woman's heart; but had he watched his niece as the crimson-flowered ge-

ranium touched her cheek, and then grew pale beside its burning radiance; had he seen the carmine fade away as rapidly as it came, and leave the whole features pale as the marble brow that surmounted them, he might in these slight, but not often erring symptoms, have discovered a key to the subsequent conduct of his niece. As it was, Sir George took the set for one of that real indifference, which it was meant only to assume, and vexed that his niece should so receive the last strong argument of his charitable motives, he proceeded in his own rough way to give a direct answer to her question.

"Tut, Siberia, you must understand who I mean: that lad, in whom I told you I took such an interest, when I found his master beating him. You remember I came home and told you——"

"Oh, ah! Yes, I do remember now," quickly interrupted the lady, with a degree of quickness that in a more observant mind would have roused the suspicion that she was anxious to avoid any further explanation of the scene

in question. Then pursuing the same tone of nonchalance, while she pulled a rose to pieces, she slowly enquired, "Have I not seen him somewhere?"

"Seen him somewhere!" replied Sir George, "it really is astonishing how you fine people wrap yourselves up in your own enjoyments, and forget the miseries of all around you! considering it was only the night before last that this very lad carried your shawl for the hour together, and followed us into this very room. I think it more than probable that you have seen him somewhere. Well, you won't see him long if he continues to be as severely worked, and treated as he is at present, for I think I have rarely met a lad more decidedly marked out by consumption than that poor boy."

"Consumption!" rapidly replied Lady Siberia, the assumed mask of indifference at once falling off from that true woman's heart, at the name of the fell monster who has wrought so much terrific agony in millions of adoring bosoms! At whose dread fiat have been severed the bride and her devoted husband—the lover

and his adored mistress—the father from his unprotected children—and the mother from her portionless girl. Though Lady Siberia had not witnessed any of the immediate terrors of this form of death, she at least knew what were its terrific results sufficiently well to tremble as she heard its name in such connexion.

"If that is the shape which consumption puts on, and if this is your opinion, why not rather take some steps to assist the one most in danger?"

"Why, truth to say," answered Sir George, "I am rather puzzled how to manage it; the first step appears to me, that of placing the sister in a respectable position, and thus through her we may be enabled to add many little comforts to the brother's slender stock."

An indifferent spectator would hardly have imagined that the animated being who now replied, was the same lady who but a few minutes since had favoured the gallant Baronet with such determined opposition. If Sir George could perchance have looked into that cave

of Adullam, a woman's heart, and seen all the impulses that prompted her conduct, we know not whether he might have been altogether so perfectly pleased as in the present instance he was with her answer.

"Why, most naughty hero, could you not have given me your true and proper motive before, for the part you wished me to take? It is your own fault if I have resisted your wishes. Now I know that charity has formed them, believe me if I can possibly forward your views in this matter I will; so while I take refuge in my bonnet, do you order the horses, and we will repair together, and see what we can make of these orphan rustics!" With these words Lady Siberia vanished, leaving Sir George perfectly convinced that his superior argument and eloquence alone had won the victory. Having ordered the horses, a question occurred to him, as he passed one of the pier glasses, whether the coat he wore, or another, was the more becoming of the two.

Would Lady Siberia notice the change?—"Women are so d——d observing!" said the

gallant Baronet, as he gently compressed his waist before the mirror, while Memory, with a sigh, reverted to the slender elasticity of some twenty years before.

"Oh! it is to do honour to her Ladyship; an officer is bound to sport his best rigging when taking a seat in a lady's carriage. James," calling to his valet, "lay out my blue coat, No. 1."

CHAPTER IX.

"WHY, my dear uncle, one would think we were going to call upon a countess instead of a companion."

"Ahem! Siberia, I don't understand you," replied the Baronet, stooping down, and pretending to pick up a handkerchief which he had very conveniently dropped for the effort; "how devilish hot this sun is: I have not felt it so warm since I commanded the Salamander in Port Royal."

"Yes, but my dear uncle, you forget how apt the sun is to discharge all colours when you sport your No. 1 coat, as you call it, in the dust and glare of such a day. Had it been a London beau, now, I should not have been surprised, but for one of you half-pay sailors,

who seem to have so much affection for your old clothes, and old ships, such a dashing appearance is really quite startling."

"Why, my dear girl, it is not every day I abandon my own feet for the imprisonment of your carriage, and therefore, in honour of you —but what engages my attention is—"

"Nay, Sir George, surely you forget—" But before Lady Siberia had time to perfect any disagreeable reminiscence, there drove slowly past the carriage, in a Bath chair, a young man of about twenty, on whose face was written the most mournful characters of death.

The face itself was evidently handsome, the colour rich and exuberant in the extreme; the features all beautifully formed, and the skin so transparent, that even the gale seemed to ruffle, and the light to beam through it. The eye was one of such perfect beauty and intelligence as rarely escapes the universal curse of being too bright to endure. In the narrow chest, however, the arched and compressed nostril, the thick mustache, the enlarged

knuckles, and the slender delicate hand, were to be read the sure indications of that disease which seems to delight in raising the perfection of human beauty merely to revel in its destruction.

As this poor invalid, this futile pilgrim in search of health, was slowly wheeled down towards the beach, to enjoy the breeze that would soon be whispering among the grass-blades on his grave, Lady Siberia laid her hand lightly on her uncle's arm, and looking at the sufferer as he passed, whispered—"That is a case of confirmed consumption, is it not? But there are none of those appearances about the lad, for whom you express yourself so much interested, are there? At least, I hope not, for if the brother is attacked, the sister can hardly hope to escape."

"Ahem! my dear, I don't exactly see that; but certainly the youngster's case is nothing near so hopeless as that of the young man that has just gone by."

"Would it not then be proper," said the niece, speaking eagerly, and then checking

her own impetuosity, and adding, more leisurely, while she seemed to be admiring the distant prospect with her eye-glass—"that is, I mean, would it not be charitable to see if nothing can be done for the young man while there is yet hope, it—it would be such a double calamity if the poor girl were to lose her only protector, and at the same time his life were sacrificed."

"A serious matter," said Sir George, shaking his head.

"What could we do for him?"

"The only cure for consumption that I ever saw, is sending the patient young to sea."

"That is but a rude remedy, if any other can be procured; it seems so rough a life for so delicate a disease: don't send the poor lad there, if you can help it."

"Why, my dear, how inconsistent you have grown; you used, if I remember right, to be very fond, not only of the sea, but all that belonged to it."

"So I am still, Sir George;" and Lady Siberia seemed at a loss to conceal some tem-

porary confusion as she spoke; "but in the present case, I confess your resource appears to me more calculated to aggravate than avert the calamity."

"Not when the remedy is called into operation in youth, though I do remember a case, over which I have often sighed, where sea sickness, long continued, certainly brought on the fatal complaint, in one of the most healthy persons I ever saw."

"Then surely we should be careful how we expose to so rash an experiment any one whom you describe as being so very fragile."

"I describe! What makes you lay all the burden of the tale on me? You must have seen the lad nearly as often yourself, and should be able quite as well to form your own opinion on the subject. We certainly will do what we can; and this must be confessed—what with overwork and bad food, it would be singular if any young person of a slight constitution, did not appear to be equally in danger; so don't look so grieved about it."

"Grieved!" repeated Lady Siberia, starting

at the word. "Oh! I am not grieved, only one naturally feels—"

But what one naturally felt, or whether it was two who naturally felt, or whatever might be the kind of feeling, the uncle was doomed never to be further illuminated on the subject.

A pause of some minutes followed, it was only broken by the carriage drawing up at the orphan's home, and setting down at the entrance both of the debating parties. After they had been kept rather longer in the waiting-room than altogether agreed with Sir George's notions of dignity, the worthy matron made her appearance, smoothing down her apron as before, and with many formal curtseys, informing both her visitors of her strong fears that the fair orphan could not that day be seen.

"Not be seen! What the devil has happened?" demanded the gallant Baronet, momentarily surprised out of all pre-reserved caution.

"Why, nothing exactly has happened to her, Sir George," was the reply, "except that

she has had a very sad letter, which has quite upset her, as you may say,"

"What about?" continued the naval officer, "what about?"

"You, Sir George, I believe."

"Me!" reiterated the veteran, in still greater surprise, "Who from?"

"Her, brother, Sir George, as I understood."

"Her brother!" gently repeated Lady Siberia, in her turn, finding something to interest herself in the varied proceedings; "What can her brother have had to communicate so distressing?"

"Something about your Ladyship, I believe, ma'am."

"Something about my niece! Why this is still more strange. What can the young man have to say about Lady Siberia?"

"Why, I believe, Sir, the young man has gone off to sea."

"Gone off to sea!" exclaimed both, in one breath.

"Why," demanded Sir George, "what in the name of fortune has led him to do that?"

"Why, I believe, your honour, he wishes to be made a Post-Captain!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" burst forth Sir George in a most hearty roar of laughter, "the devil he does!—a moderate minded fellow! why, no wonder Anna, like a sensible girl, does not quite see the feasibility of such a scheme. Siberia, did you ever hear of such a ridiculous expedition in your life?"

"Strange!" faltered forth Lady Siberia, looking very pale and gliding towards a chair, "but still, if this be the amount of the misfortune, I see nothing, in the mere fact mentioned, which need prevent his sister coming down to see us."

"No, nor I," added her uncle; "neither do I very clearly comprehend how the fact of this lad's going to sea can have the slightest relation to my niece."

"Why, Sir, I believe—"

"Will you have the kindness to let me have a glass of water," swiftly interposed Lady Siberia, "I had no idea the day was so exceedingly sultry, or I would not have come out with such an head-ache."

"Head-ache, my dear child, I had no idea that your head ached when we started: I hope you will excuse my persisting to bring you here under such circumstances. Why did you not tell me you were suffering? I hope you are not going to faint though; positively you do look—"

"Oh! no, you are mistaken entirely," said Lady Siberia, "that is not at all what I feel;" while as she spoke the words, the very room seemed swimming round with her: she not feeling greatly restored by the notice of her uncle.

Luckily at this juncture, the water made its appearance in the hands of Anna herself, who, though her eyes were still red with weeping, and therefore not quite in that presentable state, in which the one sex wishes to be seen by the other, was too anxious for any of her benefactor's family, not to waive all scruples the moment she heard her services could be useful.

The appearance of the simple-hearted Hebe, seemed, we know not why, a great relief to Lady Siberia. Of course she could not be anxious

that Sir George's attentions should be diverted from herself, of course that motive could never have entered into her calculation; she must simply have been delighted to behold that sweet opportunity for charity, the fair orphan girl, to whose admission into her own family she had so long offered so many objections.

Be that as it may, of this point no doubt could exist, namely, that her surprise at the appearance of her future companion was vivid in the extreme; and indeed we know not whether this feeling did not tend more to her speedy revival than either the smelling salts, or the cold water of the Matron: again and again, with eyes that seemed to doubt even when compelled to believe, she examined the slight but perfect form of the young girl.

There appeared so much grace and educated elegance in every look and movement of that fair being, that she could hardly reconcile with such a reality, the knowledge of the source from which it sprung. In the features also there was at once evident all that look of in-

tellectual cultivation which we are accustomed to ascribe only to the wealthy and high born; fortunately also for Anna, Lady Siberia at once agreed with her uncle, that nothing could afford a more striking contrast than such a style of beauty to her own.

CHAPTER X.

ANNA was the very being formed to be dependant on the gentleness, kindness, and courtesy of those around her; graceful to a degree, pliant, yielding, and with the most winning softness of manner, on which stern and commanding natures love to repose: knowing the futility of their opposition if resisted by us, it is on such plastic and amiable soothers of our ruder spirits that we throw the whole burden of our confidence and devotion, and even allow them to a great degree the control of our actions, from the conviction that by our forbearance alone their weakness can ever prevail: confident that the reins can be at any time resumed, these weak and helpless ones will ever be permitted by man to enjoy more real

power than our jealousy will allow us to repose in abler and haughtier spirits, from whom the trust might at some future time be difficult, if not impossible, to be regained.

This is the true secret of those opposite assortments which produce affection, friendship, and enduring love: a wise provision of nature, followed up in every department of her system, which, by a constant union of extremes, has rendered the medium eternal.

Before Lady Siberia and Anna had exchanged a single word, the former had made up her mind that the gentle creature near her should be received with even more than that kindness which Sir George was so anxious to gain for her. Remaining silent while her uncle carried on the conversation, Lady Siberia listened to the artless detail of her future protegé's sorrows, and thus arrived at those facts with which the reader is already acquainted.

In answer to Sir George's enquiries, Anna drew from her bosom Charles's studied letter, and notwithstanding that the writing was in many parts rendered illegible by her tears, Sir

George with great zeal read over the whole aloud, for the benefit of his fainting niece, who, strange to say, seemed at the conclusion very little the better for the information, and looked nervously at the door, as if fearing the entry of some person during the perusal; whether it was the Matron, whose absence was thus considered desirable, we know not, but that specimen of an antediluvian age did not, as it so happened, return till some minutes after Charles's compilation had been returned to its pure hiding place, and his present duly tendered to Lady Siberia, who, taking it in her hands, looked at it steadfastly for a few minutes, as if sadly longing to break the seal, and then without further observation laid the parcel upon a neighbouring chair.

"Since you have received the disagreeable intelligence to-day," said Lady Siberia, addressing Anna, "it might be an agreeable change to you to come to us at once; so, while my uncle, who has some visits to make in the neighbourhood, pursues his intention, you shall discharge your first duties of companion, by

riding with me a few miles on the Chudleigh road.

Sir George, when he heard these words, looked up as if utterly at a loss what interpretation to put upon them. He had come prepared to fight an almost hopeless battle; he had expected to encounter an endless train of questions on the long herd of accomplishments, in which an unfortunate companion is generally expected to smatter; commanding whole broadsides of needle-work, double shotted guns in the making up cap line, troops of small armed men in the musical department, and boarders beyond number, in the languages. Of all this he had heard not one word; he was allowed to walk over the field of battle with all the pride of a triumph, and the peace of a parade. And when he felt assured that such really was the fact, he scarcely knew how to be sufficiently thankful to the exquisite girl who had been thus generous, as he decided in his own mind, from the most disinterested impulses of charity!

He could not have expressed his thanks, for

that would have been tantamount to revealing in how doubtful a position his forces stood when he entered the room; but Sir George Auberville well knew how many languages the most untaught woman can read in a powerful eye, as well as speak with it, and in this way he speedily communicated all he thought; and for fear his ocular telegraph should have got out of repair for want of use, he first pressed both her fairy hands within his own, and then gallantly raised them to his lips.

Was it bashfulness or some other feeling, that into cheeks so lately of the most pallid hue, now hurried the warmest glow that rudest health can give? Was it bashfulness or some other feeling, that induced the dark purple of Lady Siberia's orbs to seek the ground, while their long black fringe seemed to forbid Sir George's beaming but penetrating glance, to fathom their deep meaning? Whatever the emotion may have been, Sir George evidently believed his niece to be suffering from that embarrassment which afflicts all good people when receiving thanks for their virtues.

Meanwhile, the Matron, vexed as she was that the moment had at last arrived when the gem, the flower, and ornament of her whole establishment was to be taken from her, yet fully seeing the impolicy of any resistance, immediately gave her permission to Anna to follow the suggestion of Lady Siberia, and depart at once in the latter's carriage, leaving her wardrobe and other similar matters to be sent after her to Cliffville.

The prospect now opened, naturally went a long way towards the temporary dispelling of Anna's grief for her absent brother. Her toilet was too slight to occupy more than a few minutes, and at the end of that period Sir George handed into the carriage, first his niece, then her companion, and lastly, was about to follow himself.

"Why, I thought you were about to make your visits, uncle," interposed Lady Siberia, putting the barrier of her parasol before the breast of the gallant officer.

"Oh, visits! Hem, ah! oh!—did I say

anything about visits to-day? well—no, that is —you appear, my love, too poorly to ride out alone, a day's delay in the few calls I have to make, won't be of any consequence,—so we will let them stand over till to morrow."

It was now Lady Siberia's turn to be deceived, the bait was offered to her senses, did she accept it? Women in these matters are naturally gifted with a more acute sense of observation than the lordly animal, who so coolly pronounces on her inferiority, without venturing to give her powers a fair trial.

Lady Siberia at first took the whole of Sir George's compliments for granted, but a second reflection made her question in her own mind, whether a degree of admiration of the fair girl beside him were not mixed up with it; but there were one or two feelings in her breast that prevented her analyzing this question very closely, and finding in her own mind food for deep reverie on some most interesting subjects, she, charmed with the sunshine, the divine sky, and the lovely country around her, gave herself

up to that exquisite engrossment, and resigned to Sir George the task, if task it were, of relieving the mind of Anna from any disagreeable feeling of novelty or unnecessary restraint.

CHAPTER XI.

The nature of Siberia was one of those which are difficult indeed to thaw, but whose feelings when once they begin to melt, pour down in a perfect flood: like some potent chemical combination, slow to warm; but, when fairly heated, intense in its combustion. Lady Siberia also possessed that invaluable gift of nature, an intuitive perception of character. Before Anna had remained twenty-four hours beneath her uncle's roof, our heroine had devoted herself to a quick but searching investigation of every quality of the latter's mind.

Finding in the moral anatomy all the constituents of that character which alone could command her affection, she forthwith abandoned all further restraint or suspicion, deter-

mined to cultivate and enjoy to the utmost, without pride or drawback, the boon that heaven had thrown in her way,—a humble but devoted friend; and commencing in this path with the method of an enlarged mind, she took immediate steps for finding out what parts of Anna's education had been most neglected, nor less summarily than devotedly dedicated all her energies to repairing the evil. Among other treasures that she thus discovered was that one of almost untold value, a love of harmony in an intense degree; and scarcely less decided capacity for producing that source of delight she so admired. In languages, also, Anna soon proved to her kind instructress that nature had scarcely been less liberal in her endowment.

Without for a moment calculating on what might be the result, or indeed considering whether any result might arise, Lady Siberia, as a matter of course, communicated to Sir George not only the fact of these researches, but her surprise respecting them.

The gallant Baronet evidently derived the

greatest pleasure from these communications; and when Lady Siberia ultimately confessed the degree of gratitude which she felt for Sir George's recommendation of such a protegé, the Baronet's delight reached its climax. Day after day, as he perceived his niece grow more convinced of Anna's superior endowments, he just casually threw out a hint, first, that it was a pity any capacity should not be cultivated to the utmost; then, in a few days, gave a very decided judgment on the crime of hiding talents in napkins, or refraining from laying out to the best interest every gift with which heaven intrusts us, whether in person, mind, or property; and, finally, suggested that Lady Siberia, who was so accomplished herself, might not find it disagreeable to give a few lessons to Anna. This the heiress readily promised to do; and having made to Sir George for one or two days divers reports of the progress of her pupil, the gallant officer highly approved of her kindness and industry, but finally expressed strong fears whether the labour of teaching might not become too great an exertion for the

health of the fair instructress, since, if so, as the winter *was* fast approaching, and winter always was the best season to pass in London, and in London of course was always to be obtained the very best instruction on every head,—"Why, we might go to town this year!"

"Why, my dear uncle," replied Lady Siberia, unable to restrain her laughter at the proposition, "in the first place it is a matter of amusement to me, rather than fatigue, to undertake Anna's instruction on these little matters. Even if it were not so, I could not think of dragging you up to London, a place I have always heard you so abominate; knowing at the same time that I take you away from the sea-side, which you so much admire. Besides, after all, consider the question thus: if this girl, whom I am willing to admit is a well-conducted young person, may not be at all injured, but rather the reverse, by my teaching her the little that I know, the case might be far different should you take the trouble of repairing to London, and procuring

her lessons in the various departments of a superfine education. Just reflect! To what purpose would it be devoted? Warmly as her conduct entitles us to feel towards her, her station in life is, after all, that only of the lowest order. Would it not be more kind, therefore, to invest in any other substantial way more likely to prove of permanent benefit to her, such a sum of money as the course you propose would engross?"

"Why, to be sure, there is truth in what you remark; though for the matter of my liking the sea-side in winter, a man's taste is apt to alter as he grows older. The sea-side appeared to me very chilly last winter; and in London one meets all one's old brother officers. I must say I like to pass a few months in London during the winter very much. Besides, you should remember that you have yet to come out there yourself, where an heiress of your position will be sure to create a sensation; and you will have an establishment to form of your own. It is utterly impossible that you should ever make in this out-of-the-world spot

any alliance suitable to your condition in life. As for investing the same quantity of money for the girl, that, I think, is a mistaken notion. The human mind is the clearest emanation from the Deity. It is the bounden duty of us all—and we are each bound alike—to refine and to extend it with every opportunity. When you give a person a certain sum of money, it may be a charitable deed ; but there is an end of all stimulus to industry :—when however you bestow the same sum on this young woman's abilities, you invest a small capital for her happiness in her own keeping. Industry is essentially necessary to enable her to turn it to any advantage ; and that industry, once exerted, may lead to a profit ten times greater than any investment we could contemplate. As to her rank in life, it is *the* blessing of this country, which I trust in God will ever distinguish it, that where industry is combined with ability and principle, there is scarcely any limit to be prescribed in reason for its advancement."

" Well, well, Sir George, it is very kind of you to tempt a young girl like myself with the

prospect of a London season. As to an establishment, I hate the thoughts of it. For the name of heiress, to that I conceive much the same sort of meaning is attached that there is to the term 'prize oxen.' And as far as the country goes, depend upon it if I ever alter my present estate, it shall be from motives very different from those either of vanity or fashion. Heaven, in making that one unfortunate thing an heiress, intended the dispensation, I presume, of happiness not woe; and if there is any delight in the possession of money, it is the incalculable joy of being quite at liberty to choose how, when, where, and whom you like as the party that is to participate in your happiness. Never, therefore, look for what is termed a 'great match' from me. The 'great match' is but too often a splendid misnomer for great misery."

"Pooh, pooh, Siberia; these romantic notions you'll learn to get rid of when you get to know a little more of the world. A woman of your fortune could at any rate never marry out of the peerage."

"I should as soon think of marrying out of the butler's pantry or steward's room. With my wealth it would indeed be very hard if any man of ordinary ability could not command a peerage of his own, if either of us chose to sigh for such a gewgaw; and, depend upon it, I would not be married to a fool for all the peerages that Garter king-at-arms can enumerate."

"Heigho! my little gipsy! you are coming out in a very new character! I always thought you had the audacity of Lucifer, to say nothing of his pride."

"Well, my dear uncle, I admit the possession of all those faults, if faults they are; but it is those very feelings which lead me to the sentiments I am expressing. But you have confounded the means with the end. What makes you think that I should like to marry a man of high rank?"

"Simply, your knowledge that I should wish any one so nearly connected to stand forth a leading and admired personage in every society in which she may be placed."

"Clearly a mistake, my dear uncle!—This it is which gives to a title the ordinary ball-room lustre, that makes vulgar people rush to stare upon a lord. In a country like ours, it is well known that men of rank are generally men of fortune; and the glare of money seems to blind all eyes alike. If you imagine that what you term my pride and my ambition are of this paltry kind, you do me a great wrong. All the distinction that wealth can ever afford I know that I possess. Titles of honour, if valued, are always to be bought. But my pride would rather delight to show itself in some distinction, which few if any other women could attain. Supposing that Almacks could present within its walls the high-born John of Gaunt, or the admirable Crichton, a far descended king among the Bourbons, or the impostor Mahomet, or the usurper Cromwell, which, think you, would set most women's hearts fluttering? Those who owed their greatness to their inheritance, or those who had achieved it for themselves? Why, my dear uncle, this alone is a sufficient test.—Pass an

hour or an evening with those whose greatness has descended to them, and then pass the same time with others whose greatness rests upon themselves. And is not marriage the simple but solemn question of choosing a companion with whom to pass your life? The two orders of beings will not bear comparison. Mere high position excites the vanity; but the other arouses both vanity and respect."

"Upon my word, Lady Siberia, these are startling doctrines for a woman of quality to propound; but I suppose when you have indulged them in theory for a short time, you will take up something more suitable to your condition. At any rate, to go back to our first argument, I cannot admit that because this girl's brother happens to be before the mast, the sister should never possess an opportunity of cultivating those abilities which heaven gave her. Neither does it follow, that her brother is always to remain in that position; he is a sharp shrewd lad, and it would not at all surprise me, if by hook or by crook he may not get on in the service."

CHAPTER XII.

"A LETTER by the post, Sir," said the butler, entering at this minute, and tendering the epistle in question.

"Curious sort of handwriting," said the Baronet, holding it at a considerable distance, and examining it without his spectacles, then slowly drawing forth the last; "why, it is a letter for Anna, directed to the 'House of Industry.' Why, who can she have to write to her? I thought she had no friends."

As Sir George turned the letter, first in one direction and then in another, as if to ascertain its origin, Lady Siberia quietly stole to her uncle's side, and having glanced at the characters in question, suggested that it might come from Anna's brother.

"Why, to be sure it does; how stupid I was not to have thought of that before. Where is she? In your sitting-room? Come, let us take it up to her, and see what has befallen the young dog in his wild-goose chase."

It would have been curious to have dived into the recesses of Lady Siberia's heart, and have watched what was passing there as she silently but quickly accompanied Sir George on his expedition of discovery.

Not long did the parties so anxious for information remain in doubt; scarcely had Anna broken the seal, and read the three first lines, when the expression of her countenance proclaimed how joyous were the contents of the missive. Rude as it was, Sir George begged to read it himself, while Lady Siberia, with one arm thrown round his neck, looked over his shoulder.

When the gallant Baronet thus learnt that Charles had actually been rated on the quarter-deck of the Tartar, he could scarcely believe that the writer had spoken correctly.

"With Sir Henry Coxcomb, too!" exclaimed

Sir George; "the most tyrannical, heartless, over-bearing hound in the whole service!—D——n him, how I hate him! If, now, he had written to say that he had been tied up to the gang-way, and received two dozen the morning after he came on board, I should have felt no sort of surprise at that; but to get rated on the quarter-deck! egad, that is a shock my mind won't recover from for some time to come! Perfectly inexplicable! Why, Mistress Anna, if your brother goes on at that rate, we shall soon have him up in the service!"

Then, whispering aside in the ear of Lady Siberia, who seemed to be musing in a sort of reverie—"What do you say now to the brother standing in the sister's way?"

Siberia said nothing, but turning aside her face, so that her thoughts might not be too easily read, she left the room and sauntered out alone towards the terrace in the garden, that commanded a view of the sea, and there remained walking slowly up and down for several hours. What, perchance, was the sub-

ject of reverie, it might not be difficult to guess: but, as her thoughts will best be shewn by her actions, it is to the gradual unfolding of these that our curiosity must look.

On the receipt of her brother's parcel, Anna had duly delivered his humble present, as we have seen, to Lady Siberia, while the latter, pretending to regard it with a somewhat indifferent eye, left the much-laboured offering on a chair. Now, it must be confessed that an indifferent spectator would have augured sadly for Charles's passion from this cold neglect of his effort to be remembered. This was not so, however; the pretended forgetfulness was but a little plot on the part of the Lady to impress the minds of those around her with the utter want of any interest entertained by herself in either Charles or his present, while, in reality, she was dying to examine what had been transmitted to her, which would have been the case independent of any feeling for the donor, with most women.

She trusted, however, to the parcel being observed either by Anna or the matron, and

thus handed into her carriage. In this, however, she was deservedly mistaken; the unfortunate packet escaped all notice; she was allowed to drive off without it: and some feeling of pride or consciousness prevented her from demanding that which she was now only the more eager to possess. She next trusted that the matron would have sent the missing parcel. But the matron, who considered herself lady of the manor, had a wondrous respect for all estrays, and had already held many debates with herself as to whether she might not break the seals on the paper, and ask the contents to come on a visit to her wardrobe.

Several times since that day Lady Siberia had been on the point of mentioning her brother's present to Anna; but as often as the words rose to her lips, the blood also seemed to mount to her forehead, and some unaccountable feeling induced her to remain silent. She trusted, at any rate, that when Anna's wardrobe came to Cliffville, the forgotten packet would make it appearance. Mrs. Matron thought otherwise, and she proved correct.

This certainly was a fault in the otherwise courageous and straightforward character of Lady Siberia; she deserved punishment for entertaining this little tendency to plot, and she certainly met her deserts.

Now, however, a fair opportunity occurred of asking for the present in question, without seeming to be particular, or incurring the risk of having her motives made a matter of comment. While Lady Siberia continued to walk upon the terrace, and turn over in her mind these various matters, Anna approached her from the house, to indulge, with more privacy than could otherwise be obtained in the presence of Sir George, her self-felicitation on her brother's advancement.

Still Lady Siberia took care that this subject should be first opened by the sister, and not herself, though she felt it would be only kind and natural in any one situated as she was, to congratulate Anna on a matter of such interest. We always blind ourselves, or, from this very tenderness to approach the subject, Lady Siberia would naturally have grown

suspicious of her own feelings. As it was the idea never once crossed her mind that the cobbler's apprentice was, or ever could be, any thing else to her than the cobbler's apprentice, to the end of the chapter. After listening for some time, with much attention to Anna's remarks on her brother's good fortune, Lady Siberia suddenly turned round, and laying her finger on Anna's shoulder, said, with an air of marked indifference :—"By the way, was there not a packet of some kind which you gave me the other morning in connexion with your brother ?"

"Yes, to be sure, Lady Siberia, it is a humble present from him to you."

"Oh, then, if that is the case, I fear it must have been left, or lost somewhere the morning you mentioned it. I have a vague sort of remembrance of putting something on a chair; would it not almost be worth while to make some enquiries about it?"

Anna, little suspecting herself to be so completely the dupe of her noble friend, gave an instant acquiescence to this suggestion, and retiring at once wrote to the matron, describing

the parcel, and requesting that she might have it forwarded to her without delay. In the course of half an hour the messenger returned, and Lady Siberia, rendered wiser than to coquette any longer with her property, received it in as quiet a manner as she could, and then stealing to her own room there opened the packet.

No one was present to declare what might be her aspect at the time of first gazing on the singular memento between people of such different rank, but it afterwards appeared that she tried on the shoes enclosed to her, and wondered how, among the other extraordinary feats which this youth seemed destined to achieve, he could possibly have contrived to get so exactly the shape of a foot which its owner was not aware that he had ever seen.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sir George, on returning from the memorable scene, in which, in all probability, he had saved the life of our hero from the violence of his master, had, as a good joke, related to his niece the whole circumstances of the affray. She knew, therefore, on how singular a conquest the power of her charms had fallen, and treating it in her own mind as a sort of ridiculous farce, too absurd indeed to merit her anger, it yet left in her mind a degree of interest for one whose admiration must at any rate be derived from the purest source—namely, an admiration of herself, not her money.

There was a degree of singularity, too, in our hero's raising his thoughts so far above him, that strengthened this interest. The tale of his

wasting away, consumed by a passion, the folly of which was so well known to him, that he could not be brought to mention its hopeless existence to any human ear; this, the fact of his superior intelligence and soft manners—the description of his personal appearance, as handsome to a degree, but sinking beneath the strength of an unconquerable attachment, were circumstances that would have combined to arrest the thoughts, and the pity of most women. How dangerous an emotion the latter is we know too well. It is in truth but love, attired in less alarming guise.

Sir George had also spoken favourably of Charles's acquirements and deportment as being equally above his station and his years; and when, to crown all, there came his resolute devotion to all the horrors of a sea life, just as Siberia was deprecating his exposure to them, even for the sake of his health, and this too for a purpose to which she could not close her eyes,—the seemingly wild struggle for a Post-Captaincy,—it must be confessed that Charles occupied a far stronger, and more fe-

quent position in her thoughts than she would by any means have been inclined to admit as possible, had any stranger taxed her with the fact. In conclusion, Siberia now learnt that he had already, with a celerity truly wonderful, carved his way to the first step of that perilous ascent which led from the rank of a serf to the pre-eminence of a hero.

All these thoughts had passed again and again in continuous reverie before our heroine, since the receipt of Charles's letter, and though she could not help blushing, and feeling a degree of anger as the present before her bore testimony to the original low calling of him on whom she mused; still, despite of every reason, there was a tender degree of interest around Charles's remembrance that only deepened in proportion as she struggled to cast it from her. Even the pain connected with his image contributed to bring it the more frequently under her contemplation, and while examining, with a mixed feeling of admiration, laughter, and shame, the proof of our hero's handywork, trying in vain to conjecture by

what means he had procured so perfect a knowledge of the size of her little feet, she suddenly remembered the scene at the fountain, when turning round from a distance she had seen the pale and melancholy lad kissing the very ground on which she had then so lately trodden.

The mystery of his having so exactly the size of her feet was now evident, and she at once arrived at the correct conclusion that Charles had taken it from her foot print upon the sand. It is true she could not guess that the very particles of those foot prints had been treasured up by that young worshipper; and were now on the far distant ocean perpetually pressed to the lips and bedewed with the tears of him, who for her sake exposed himself without murmur to the greatest risks and the severest trials. Without this knowledge, however, Lady Siberia felt her cheeks burn with the most painful intensity, and her heart bound with no great degree of tranquillity, when even in the privacy and solitude of her chamber, she recalled that scene upon the

shore, and now for the first time admitted the entire meaning of what she then beheld.

Angry and passionate, and tender by turns, she knew not what to think of the transaction, now she determined that the present should be sent back; then she reflected, that in Charles's low position such a step would be giving to the matter the very importance she wished to withhold; then she resolved to take the whole affair as a matter of course, wear the shoes out like any other shoes, throw them by and think no more of them than if they came from any other cobbler. How that atrocious word seemed to hang on the lips unwilling to give it utterance!—And then, she knew not why, but yet she felt that no power could have induced her to wear those memorials of Charles's occupation in public! Every eye would, to her imagination, be fixed upon her feet. She decided to destroy them, and yet, would not this be ungrateful to a degree? At any rate she would put them away where they could never meet her eye again.

An unused drawer was hunted out, and the

troublesome present confided to its recesses; yet before ten minutes had elapsed, she found the drawer open, the present unwrapped from its covering and her eyes fixed upon it! Hitherto her life had been passed in that dead lethargy and calm that so often and so mysteriously precedes the tempest of the passions. She had read of love and heard it variously described, but now to find the sweet torments of that distressing malady springing up in her bosom, even though she did not as yet suspect its nature, and this for one whom she was convinced she could never own even to herself otherwise than as a subject for humiliation, a cause for blushing—this was indeed a torture and a visitation for which the haughty heiress was most wholly unprepared.

Tormented, pleased, and maddened by turns, she reasoned, argued, laughed, and stormed, but all in vain, she could neither change the subject of her thoughts, nor the intensity with which, in spite of her better judgment, they assailed her, and finding for the first time in her life that there was a power sufficiently

potent to master her own will; the haughty, the high born, the proud, accomplished, the beautiful, the irresistible Lady Siberia, threw herself upon her couch, and gave way to a passionate burst of tears. In an hour she rose, and somewhat more collected, as well as more awake to the danger that threatened her, she came to the prudent resolution of putting out of her sight every thing that could at all remind her of the unfortunate young man, whose folly, —as she termed it to herself—had in such an extraordinary manner interrupted her repose.

Yet even now, marked as the symptoms of her malady had become, she had not strength of mind sufficient, resolutely to analyse her emotions, and had any one told her that either now or at any future time she was likely to fall in love with one so greatly below her own rank in life, she would have received the accusation, for such she considered it, with the strongest indignation and discredit.

Having followed up her resolution of placing out of view all that could remind her of our hero, and bestowed in the uttermest abyss of

endless boxes the unfortunate pair of shoes, she descended to the rooms below, quite convinced in her own mind, that she was once more perfect mistress of her own equanimity. On entering the drawing-room she found Sir George with the newspaper in his hand standing beside the chair of Anna, her protegé.

"Ah! Siberia," said the veteran, as soon as he heard his niece enter, "just come here and look at this little drawing which Miss James has got to surprise you; 'pon my soul, it is an extraordinary likeness, it is indeed."

As Anna was usually in the habit of indulging in the landscape line, Lady Siberia perfectly expected to experience a living picture of a parson and clerk, or cobbler's nose, or some other euphoniously named rock in the neighbourhood. Unsuspiciously enough she did as she was desired, advanced boldly to the table, looked over Anna's shoulder, and there, equally to her horror and surprise, recognised the pale, but striking features of him towards whom she had so lately resolved that not one truant thought should wander!

The suddenness of the surprise was more than even her firm presence of mind could master; starting back from the table to conceal her change of countenance as well as to avoid gazing more than she could help on a countenance that so unaccountably disturbed her equanimity, she replied in a cold and indifferent, but hollow tone:

"Yes, I think it is like, though having seen the face so seldom, I should hardly venture to give an opinion."

There was something in this reply so different from the warm manner in which Lady Siberia had hitherto spoken of any accomplishment or ability unexpectedly displayed by her new companion, that her altered manner instantly jarred on the acute mind of Sir George; and he, not knowing what to make of it, and remembering that she was herself a most beautiful miniature artist, a thought occurred, with no slight degree of pain, that some little feeling of jealousy might be at the bottom of the change he had observed. Anxious to remove so frightful a stumbling-block from between the friendship

of the protector and the dependant, he good-naturedly added—

"I don't mean to say that it is anything to be compared with what you could do, Siberia; it was only as to the likeness I spoke, now, if you were to take this for the features, and finish up a drawing in your own style, we really should have a perfect resemblance of the young Reefer."

Poor Lady Siberia! it almost seemed as if she was destined to get deeper into difficulty in this matter, in proportion as she struggled to avoid it; the very idea of her being asked to paint a picture of the party whose very memory she had but a few seconds since resolved utterly to efface! There was one point, however, for which she felt grateful, Sir George had designated him as the young Reefer; it was the first time she had heard that name applied to the absentee, whom her uncle generally seemed to take a pleasure in designating "the young Cobbler."

Of all the trades or terms on earth, that of a "Cobbler," was the most hateful—as Lady Siberia thought—she had heard, or ever could

hear. For this advancement, at any rate, she was thankful, and seeing at a glance the mistake that Sir George had made as to her being jealous, she was now obliged to dispel this suspicion by returning to the table, boldly taking up the miniature in question, and passing a lengthened eulogium upon it and all its details; having previously, however, carried off the drawing to one of the window recesses, where, however well her voice might be heard, her looks could neither be seen nor commented upon.

"After all," said Lady Siberia, sighing deeply and communing with herself in an under tone, "there is a pleasure in gazing on any thing so handsome as this: humble as the estate of the poor boy may be, one can scarcely believe that features in themselves so noble, were ever intended by nature to be placed amongst the lowest of human beings, and doomed to earn the bread of life by the most servile employment. One cannot trace here any thing but the loftiest emotions and the highest birth." And

that it was like—very like the being whom it was intended to imitate, her own fluttering heart assured her. Profiting by the hint given, Anna now ventured to express the delight it would give her if Lady Siberia would follow the notion expressed by Sir George, and make a finished drawing from the sister's rude and untutored sketch.

"Nay, I could not possibly think of depriving you of any part of the honour you have so ably won," replied Lady Siberia, handing back the portrait to the sister.

"I know," said Anna timidly, "it is asking too great a favour for one so humble, and so much beneath your rank."

"Pho !—a pack of stuff!" interrupted Sir George, "those notions of false pride are in admirable place amongst retired shopkeepers.—People of true condition never trouble their heads about them, it is a mere matter of art. If the Lady may paint her dog, she may surely choose any other subject for her pencil; besides, this is a young hero, he has achieved at first

starting what veterans have sighed through years to gain.—Sib," as Sir George called his niece, in moments of petism, "will be delighted to finish him off for you."

CHAPTER XIV.

Was it that the phrase was so pleasing to Lady Siberia, or did she really not possess strength to maintain her late resolution? The result was the same; she offered no further opposition to the request, and within an hour from determining to banish every thing that could in the slightest degree recall to remembrance the troubler of her tranquil mind, she found herself compromised to sitting down and studying most intensely his every look for a week together, recalling the choicest expression of each feature, studiously recollecting every thing that could make in his favour, and perpetuating the whole by her utmost labour and art; and thus, with the consent of her only guardian, erecting our hero into an object worthy of most marked regard.

Wondrously prudent, however, she consoled herself with this determination, that the moment the portrait was finished nothing on earth should ever induce her to let the tenacious image enter her remembrance again. In the mean while, as there was no help for it, she resigned herself to the task which had been so thrust upon her, and after several days devoted toil, which she bestowed the more ardently in the hopes of being more speedily enabled to put the banishing part of her scheme into execution, she succeeded in finishing a portrait, that, as the attached sister well declared—did every thing but speak.

She was quietly seated one morning at her task, while Sir George was sitting idly by the fire listening to Anna's perusal of the London papers, when once more the postman, that sad mortal who seems to bear Pandora's box in a leathern wallet, sent in a single letter to Sir George.

Anna, discontinuing the paper until the Baronet had got through this despatch, a dead silence succeeded the breaking of the seal; a

brief expression of surprise from the gallant officer, gave notice to his companions that some unusual intelligence had come to hand, and as the smile on his features proclaimed the news to be not less novel than agreeable, both the ladies fixed their attention on the veteran in mute expectation of sharing in his pleasure.

"What an odiously long letter," cried the impatient Siberia, "who can it be from?"

"Hush! child!" was the only answer to this inquiry, as the Baronet raising a finger, gave evidence of his deep absorption in the contents of the document in his hand.

"By Jove!" cried Sir George, as he at length finished, and laid it down, "as singular a passage in a man's history as I ever remember to have met or heard! If but half this good fortune continues to follow him, he must rise to the head of the tree beyond all question or delay."

Something seemed to indicate both to Anna and Lady Siberia, that these exclamations could only relate to one particular party, in whom, from different causes, they both took an

equal interest, yet neither of them liked to risk putting the question that should decide the fact.

"Read that, my dear," said Sir George, handing the letter over to the former, "that rogue of a brother of yours not only contrives to get hold of promotion but prize money into the bargain, and now, absolutely writes to me to turn banker for him! Read it aloud! Egad, I still seem to think I have dreamed the matter."

With no very steady voice, Anna fulfilled the request of Sir George, and read aloud an epistle which our hero had written on the afternoon of his receiving the reward from Sir Henry Coxcomb, in which Charles detailed at length the narrow escape which the son of the latter had made by his means, and the whole conduct of Sir Henry: finally stating, that he had no occasion for money on board a ship, and, therefore, would take it as the kindest favour of Sir George to stand his banker, and appropriate to the use of his sister any sums she might from time to time require.

Our hero generously gave the whole to her in the case of his demise, and requested her to give all she could spare to the necessities of Mrs. Tyler.

After various remarks had been made on the contents of this document, and the highest praises rendered to our hero, for those qualities which he displayed, Sir George ended by expressing his determination to write that evening to Sir Henry Coxcomb, once more reiterating his conviction that Charles's progress in the service was certain, provided he only would continue to act with the same degree of caution he had already shewn.

And what said Lady Siberia? Too deeply agitated to allow the expression of her real sentiments to find utterance, she contented herself with joining sufficiently in the general praise, so as not to render her silence remarkable, and handing over the portrait, now finished, to the delighted and unsuspicious sister, she retired to muse alone on the favourite terrace that over-looked the sea.

"Of what use is it," said the melancholy

girl, half uttering her thoughts, "that I finish the work thrust upon me, and resolve to think no more upon the subject, when every few days seems destined to bring him before me in a still more elevated position?—yet is not this forced remembrance, a tribute well due to unusual worth?—

"Why should I arrogate to myself a greater share of pride than all around me? The answer is too ready to be welcome. To no one else can the remembrance of that worth be dangerous, and on no mind does it appear to exercise half the influence it so fatally possesses over mine! But, to decide this question properly, let us suppose that his dreams or my uncle's prophecies, ever could be realized, supposing that he rose to rank and station in the service, would it ever be possible that—" and here she paused.—Then after some time spent in mournful hesitation, she answered her own query with a deep sigh: and that brief but emphatic monosyllable, that with its short, sharp note, has rung the knell to so many and such fair hopes!

"No!" pursued the muser, "now and ever it is impossible; and, therefore, while yet in my power, let me take some decisive step to regain that tranquillity, which no prudent woman ought to endanger; but there comes the difficulty! It is clear that all resolutions of forgetfulness are vain! Some unfortunate circumstance or another continually occurs to recall the image you would banish!"—here another long pause succeeded, and after several systems had been proposed and rejected, a smile of triumph lighted up the face of the beauty, and clasping her hands, with the air of one who has found some long-sought treasure, she exclaimed. "The very thing! In this secluded village, the want of occupation, enables thought to get the better of the mind that engendered it, whereas, in the turmoil of a London life, existence takes a new aspect. I will accept my uncle's proposal; her education will afford the best possible motive, and though I have no wish to lose my liberty, yet surrounded by all that accomplishment and station can command in his sex, I shall soon learn to forget the pain-

ful and humiliating delusion, which the quiet and retirement of this place have unfortunately engendered."

Whatever might be the faults of Lady Siberia's character, indecision at least, was not one of them. Seizing the first opportunity, which occurred on the following morning, our heroine led the Baronet on to repeat his proposal of taking them up to town, and after pretending at first some slight reluctance, she at last expressed her readiness to accede to his plan, provided it were at once put into operation. Sir George joyfully closed with the offer, and on the third day from Lady Siberia's determining on this line of conduct, the family were on their road to London.

In looking back at the last ten years of life, how few of us can refrain from sighing over the unintentional tortuosities of our paths! How few have the felicity of reviewing, in their past career, any course less devious than that of some winding river, and thus, instead of rushing straight to the goal, and at once grasping the happiness within our reach, how often

have we been most palpably misled by idle fear or over-scrupulous notions of prudence, with what sad pains have we circuitously avoided the direct path to joy, or at the happiest, reached it only after wasting years of delay by some infinitely more tedious route; frequently to win some far ignobler prize than we imagined, and alas! more frequently than all, to gain but utter shipwreck of the whole!

To which of these three points did Lady Siberia's worldly but not unnatural pride, now lead her? The province of our story is to follow and behold. Perhaps she only acted as the great majority would act, and with that partial view of the case, which was all she could then obtain—we may also add in the only way in which she ought to have acted,—but in either case, thus far at least, she is entitled to our commendation, that believing her duty to consist in a certain line of conduct, she followed it with unflinching courage, whatever might be the pain it inflicted on her own feelings, and, if in thus boldly rushing into the vortex of the selfish world, she should become

—as is too often the fate of the warm, the enthusiastic, and the good—a prey to the sordid machinations of the designing, she is at least entitled to this claim on our sympathy, that her fault was only one of those numerous errors of judgment in life's vast hazard, which we all of us have more or less reason most sadly to deplore.

CHAPTER XV.

"Upon my soul, Horace, you really must take a wife. I have thought over the various dilemmas of your position again and again; and though it is prescribing a harsh measure, I don't observe that you have any other help for it! You see you have run through the whole of your aunt's property."

"Well, my dear Sir, it was but a mere forty thousand pounds at the outside, even if I had had it clear; but when it came to me out of the clutches of those infernal Jews who held my post-obits, I do declare to you, upon my honour, that it arrived at last a mere bagatelle; something not much above nineteen, or at the most twenty thousand, to speak most liberally of it."

"Well, well, I know there are great allow-

ances to be made for you, so don't imagine I was going to visit your conduct with unmixed blame; but still, upon my honour, you have been somewhat extravagant."

"Well, Sir, I admit I have; but ours you see is such an expensive regiment, and somehow or another at starting a man is more apt to fall into extravagant habits than is quite correct."

"Nor is that all: you must remember, Master Horace, I have paid your debts for you twice over; but your mother has some strong notions as to the claims of the other children. The property, you must remember, was encumbered when I came to it; and, therefore, unless you make up for your past carelessness by a good marriage, I really shall think that you are not behaving with due consideration for your family. Besides, I hear that you have been unfortunate enough to take from her home a young lady, to whom you have been so incautious as to attach yourself! I don't ask you to give this person up, at any rate just now; because, until your marriage is fixed and

approaching very near, the respect you may entertain for this young person will keep you out of harm's way in other matters; and, as a question of prudence, it enables you to avoid getting entangled with married women, which I confess I never thought desirable in English society with a small income. It is on this point, therefore, that I have sent for you to give you the benefit of my advice, which is summed up in one word—MARRY."

"To which my reply, my Lord, is really in another—YES. I will, if you will only provide me with a lady who will require as little love-making as possible, and bring me as much money instead! I am perfectly ready to resign myself to the gentle state to-morrow. And as to the other little affair you mentioned, I beg you will give yourself no apprehension on that score; for though I like the party as a pretty accomplished little rustic, I undertook the superintendence of her education more from the dulness of country quarters than any other motive. As to any love in that case, though one can't help feeling a little amiable on such

occasions, yet you may be sure all my affection in the affair will be as easily laid aside as it was assumed—of course."

"Very proper;—and at least, my dear boy, I am glad you have not forgotten your duty to me in these matters, so I need not trouble you any more on that point till the other approaches its crisis. As I was going to remark, this is the state of your affairs:—you have spent your aunt's fortune, whether in this way or the other it is now idle to inquire; you have had your debts paid twice; they have unfortunately grown upon you a third time, and I am unable to render you any further pecuniary assistance. The question now is, what course it will be advisable for you to pursue. As you find the army so expensive, I have thought three or four times whether it would not be better for you to sell your commission in the Lancers, which appears to me to involve you in just as much expense as the Guards used to entail, and instead of that I will get my cousin to put you in for one of his boroughs, and you could resume town life."

"Upon my honour, Sir, I don't see where the economy of that would be, unless in the fact of its depriving me of his Majesty's pay in the Lancers."

"Why, yes, Horace, it would lower your income at first; but that is not my source of apprehension, which rests rather upon your want of genius to make this peculiar profession available."

"As how, my Lord?"

"As thus: there are several young men about town similarly situated, who possess an unexceptionable establishment of four or five thousand a year, and who, to my certain knowledge, are utterly unable to show the regular possession of three hundred per annum to support it. But as I never was able to acquire this excellent diplomacy as a youngster myself, I hardly consider it prudent to recommend the attempt to you, though you may make the experiment if you like."

"Why, thank you, Sir, I am afraid it requires rather a peculiar education; for which, as you observe, I should fear my limited genius

is hardly sufficient. I think if we could come to some more regular understanding it would be better, even though it did embrace marriage for its basis."

"Well, perhaps so; for in the other vocation I confess there is this danger,—gentlemen of the diplomacy, to which I allude, are always more or less mixed up with men who lose heavily by play. Now, without wishing to say any thing rude or ungenteel as to their amusements, it might happen that a man should get some reflections made upon his moral character, for which nothing could compensate him; and here, Horace, let me take this opportunity of cautioning you, that men who are to rise in the world must have the strictest regard to their moral reputation. I always had. I assure you I have found it to tell immensely. Well, therefore, we arrive at one conclusion, unanimously, which is always agreeable.—Marriage is your trump card in the present state of the game."

"Exactly so, Sir. Now the only question that remains is the name of the lady."

"Exactly, Horace; I was about to approach that point. Pass me the claret, will you. You know I have always been what the world calls an indulgent father, and what I call a sensible one,—namely, I have never treated you as a child, or, in other words, as one whom fate and accident gave to me as a superior kind of slave; but as a young man, with whom I have been willing to live on terms of the closest friendship, so long as he would allow me, and to whom I have ever extended the consideration of not being wholly disentitled to forming and delivering his own opinion on all matters connected with his own welfare. As a proof to you that my line of conduct is unaltered, I will now read to you a memorandum which General O'Shaughnessy made for me at the club the other day. It mentions, I see, seven ladies; any one of whom I shall be happy to receive into my family for your sake."

"Oh! thank you, Sir, you are very kind; but I really think we may spare ourselves the trouble of discussing so many distinctions; any one that you may select will perfectly

satisfy my notions upon the subject. Indeed, as far as I can see, there is only one point on which we need trouble ourselves. Let us simply pick out the richest. Do you get me the introduction, and I will marry her."

"No, Horace; that is not the way in which a man of the world should treat this subject. It is true that we both look with equal and sovereign contempt on all that trash of love, &c. with which poets and novelists fill up their amusing but false volumes; still, as a man can only expect to make one or at most two marriages in his life, unless he is very lucky, it is a matter which should be conducted with becoming caution. You will find it rather a heavy estate to farm, even with the sunniest weather; therefore take my advice, hear my list, and don't scorn all knowledge of the country before you set off to ride across it."

"Oh! very good, Sir, with all my heart; my only object was to save you trouble."

"Never admit that word where the end is good. First fill your glass, and then mine, while I read to you."

The obedient son, the Honourable Captain Horace Hartlesse, filled the glass of his moral father, Lord Stoneley; and the latter, intent on parental cares, proceeded as follows:

"The first, Horace, for I have altered them slightly from O'Shaughnessy's list, by putting them down alphabetically. The first is the Indian widow, Mrs. Annesley; she has nine thousand a-year, but then it is only a jointure."

"Well, Sir, but still as long as the incumbrance lasted, there would be the estate."

"True, that is a point not altogether to be forgotten, and as she has no children by her first husband, why a second might make no change in her arrangements in this respect, which, for the younger son, is rather desirable than otherwise. She, it seems, is five-and-thirty, and that's desirable, as it is only about eight years older than yourself, you see."

"Oh! a mere trifle, Sir."

"This lady I know very well, and could introduce you myself."

"Well, Sir, I think she will do admirably. For my part, I fancy I am rather partial to a

widow. Widows have always plenty to say for themselves."

"Why, yes, the ability to talk well is an accomplishment prized by all, and understood by very few; besides, in your particular case, too, where you don't want to be bored with much exertion, it saves trouble to open the trenches with an experienced campaigner. However, that is No. 1, not quite to be forgotten, though not quite what we want.

"No. 2 is of the same tribe, relict of Lord Arthur Atherly—very good connexion—an estate of seven thousand a-year, left in her own controul, by her husband—poor fool! Then you see she has a son. Pretty and interesting I see my memorandum calls her, but that's of no consequence."

"Why not indispensable, Sir; but still it would make up for the extra two thousand a-year in the last case. Of course, she would settle the estates upon me for life, and divide equally with the children of both marriages."

"Oh, of course, or else I presume it would be your own fault."

"Oh! of course, Sir; just make a minute against her name, will you?"

"I have done it, Horace. I think there is a degree of probability about her suiting us, and though I don't know her myself, I have a friend who does: and, therefore, in point of accessibility there is nothing to be feared there. Now, the next on the list is Miss Denham. I am told she has thirty thousand a-year, but whenever I take a woman's property on the report of others, instead of my own knowledge, I always divide by three, which I find gives me the amount of her income with nearly as much accuracy as her banker could, and more than he would.

"Certify it, therefore, that Miss Denham has a clear ten thousand a-year, and no more. She is an orphan also, which is always desirable; or, what is nearly as good, her father is confined in Bedlam, for attempting a divorce without the assistance of the ecclesiastical law."

"But is that practicable, Sir? I did not know it could be managed."

"Oh, yes, in the mode he adopted, which was simply applying a razor to her beard instead of his own."

"What, then, do you mean to say he cut her——?"

"—Throat, exactly; a proceeding she would have thought very unkind, as it was incontestably the best looking part of her person; so he, with a laudable respect for her self-love, having taken advantage of her being asleep, avoided inflicting any wound on her self-love, though obliged to be less considerate to her person. These family jars, though they have increased the rent-roll by a long minority, still, I confess, may be held debatable, as far as they go to prove the eligibility of the match."

"Why yes, Sir, there may be madness in the family."

"Oh, of course; but after the first year or two, I suspect most men would prize a straight-waistcoat for a wife, as the greatest luxury. Besides, she is a ward in Chancery, and could not be married under age, without awkward settlements. This lady I neither know myself

nor do I know any one that does, but that is very immaterial."

"Oh, quite so."

"Then next comes a young woman with three thousand a-year; young, beautiful, amiable, and so forth; but as she could not find you in segars, it is idle to waste time on her qualifications.—Then we have Miss Morton, with four; she may go by for the same reason.—And now we come to the last, Lady Siberia Sweetbriar. Now this young lady, I think, Horace, would just suit you."

"How much has she, Sir?"

"Why, something between seventeen and twenty thousand a-year. I have not yet been able to make out the exact amount, but it is still accumulating very fast, for two reasons—first, she is a minor; and next, she is living very quietly with my old friend, her uncle, Sir George Auberville. His sister married the Earl of Rosebush, and the best part of the property, which is unentailed, was settled on his only child, this girl. I met them both the other day at Lady Trifle's; and on learning

what were Lady Siberia's expectations, I remembered Sir George had once given me a passage in his frigate out to the coast of Spain. The Aubervilles once were connected with our family, you know."

"Yes, I remember, Sir; I think it was as far back as the reign of the second James."

"If it were in the time of Noah, it would answer our end quite as well; it is always a good excuse for pushing close a desirable intimacy, or looking coldly on a disagreeable one. I only met them three days ago, and I called at the Horse Guards for your leave of absence the next morning."

"I see, Sir, you have not forgotten my interest."

"True, and having brought affairs to this happy point, I only hope you will follow up my example; this is clearly the prize of the drawing, and I confess I shall not be pleased unless you make a point of winning it."

"Sir, I assure you, you may rely on my carrying the little fort by storm. You know that whenever I do make up my mind to any

point, nothing defeats me; let me see seventeen thousand a-year. By the shield of Mars, my dear Sir, you may look on the conquest as already achieved. It only requires the little formality of a surrogate's commission, and she is as much Lady Siberia Hartlesse, as if you now saw her returning from the wedding."

"Well, my dear boy, I congratulate you upon the fact, and in this alliance, so prudently adopted by yourself, believe me I see the fullest atonement for any little past extravagance. Now finish the bottle, and we will pay our respects to your mother and sisters; there is one word of caution I must give you as to your suit—there must be no laziness in your wooing in this matter. You have rivals by the battalion already in the field, all the Lord Harrys and Lord Fredericks, with no end of Honourable Misters, are hunting the game in every direction."

"Oh! they be hanged."

"Most willingly!—But that is not all, for being what they call a remarkably beautiful girl herself, there has already come upon the

ground a bachelor that half the heiresses, and all the spinsters in London are trying to catch hold of: no less a person than the Duke of Diddlebury."

"The Duke of Diddlebury! why that is a formidable matter, at least the title is; though I may thank my stars the man is not. If this Lady Saltseller, or whatever you call her, were a poor girl, I should stand no chance with the rich Duke, but being so large an heiress, she will be sure to look upon these baubles as matters that may be had at any time; while in point of personal appearance—"

"Oh! there the Duke can't come near you, but he is an uncommonly good-hearted fellow."

"In that I admit his Grace to beat me hollow; but, thank Heaven, heart is a matter which the women never yet looked at, and never will. By the way, are you sure that this Lady Cream of Tartar is so very handsome?"

"Why, you know I don't care for beauty, Horace, myself; but, certainly, if beauty is a matter to be regarded, why she certainly is

possessed of more of it than any woman I ever remember to have seen."

"Ah! indeed! Now, for instance, would you say she is as handsome as I am?" twirling his mustachoes, "that is, considering the difference of sex."

"Why," said the approving father, "not quite so handsome, perhaps, as all that; but still very beautiful."

"Well, if she really is, we must march the whole strength of our troops to the siege; and, after all, one can't expect to win twenty thousand a year without some little exertion."

"Oh, no, certainly not;" replied the father, most readily coming into this reasonable view of the case. "And, after all, it must be confessed, such a person as Lady Siberia would make an agreeable addition to our family, or what the good people call 'family circle,' Horace."

"Ha, ha, ha! 'the good people!' ha, ha, ha! There are many singular fancies in the world, but that of being 'good' has always appeared to me to be the most d—d ridiculous of any!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the father.

"Ha, ha, ha!" repeated the son; and thus, mutually satisfied of their perfect wisdom, the worthy pair left the dining-saloon of their house in Park Lane, and ascended to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XVI.

FORTUNATELY, in this world, it is rarely that all the members in a family are equally faulty, or equally virtuous; thus it was in our friend Lord Stoneley's "family circle." After the exquisite specimen of disinterested feeling and humanity displayed by the father, few would look for any very elevated sentiments in any child of the same parent; but in this reasoning there was some degree of truth, and more injustice. Without asserting any thing very extraordinary in their favour, we may at least remark, that the two sisters of Horace Hartlesse were as unlike the brother as any part of one brood can be dissimilar from the rest. This is in a great measure to be attributed to the fact of their having chiefly been reared at their

father's country-seat, away from the contaminating callousness of London crowds and London struggles. Neglected happily, in a great measure, by their own parents, their characters had been chiefly formed from the notions of their governess, and their own reading, aided in a most material degree by the suggestions of their brother's tutor, who, fortunately for them, was a young man of high honour and integrity, and one who did not abuse those opportunities which families of rank so frequently and so foolishly throw in the path of dependants of this class.

Thanks to the accident that led to a happy termination of this hazardous style of rearing; the two girls grew up simple, unaffected, young women; painfully conscious, alas! from their mother's frequently insisting on the point, that their best chances of worldly prosperity and happiness lay in their making advantageous marriages; but both of them determined to consult their own inclinations in preference to any other authority upon the subject. Amongst other matters it used to be a frequent subject

of joke among them, that no young man was ever suffered to cross the threshold of their doors, much less to gain the sacred penetralia of their father's mahogany, unless he could at least boast this claim to their notice,—namely, the being the eldest son to a large property, or otherwise equivalently distinguished by the gifts of fortune.

Lord Stoneley himself held a post under Government of some two thousand a year, the rest of his income was chiefly derived from estates in the West Indies, so that he took a considerable interest in what our American friends denominate "the Nigger Question." He had the reputation of being a man of taste and vertù. His house was crowded from top to bottom with evidences of this fancy, of every shape and kind, the most beautiful vases, the rarest pictures, the most costly gems of carving, enamelling, porcelain, mosaic, and every style of work connected with or relating to art. It was almost impossible to enter his dwelling without being struck by the air of *recherche*, refinement, and distinguished elegance that

reigned around; and almost equally impossible to move or retreat without throwing to the ground some treasured bijou of the owner's collection, some exquisite vase or fragile antiquity, that, as you picked the ruined pieces from under your feet, you learnt to have cost several hundred guineas.

From such a description it will naturally be supposed that Lord Stoneley was a person of great elegance in his own appearance, and great liberality in his disposition. With respect to the first, he was a round, fat, dumpy, pursy man, very short in his stature, and very oleaginous in his complexion, a sort of person whom you would be most unwilling to see sitting by your fire-side during the first month of a new carpet, for fear the unhappy man should melt away upon the spot, and spot the spot on which he melted.

A more perfect antithesis to elegance was perhaps never exhibited; with regard to his liberality a great deal would have been thought by any bystander overhearing his discussion with his son, in which the payment of

the latter's debts was so greatly insisted on; but this will at once vanish when we state the fact, that the first amount of the said debts was under fifteen hundred pounds, and the second short of a thousand; and even with respect to these, the tradesmen who had no probability of reproaching the son with any peculiar dishonesty, were forced to make their election between seven shillings in the pound or young hopeful's walking through the Insolvent Debtors Court.

But his Lordship was a great man for moral benefits; and, as he told his agent who managed this delicate transaction of the debts, that the two moral benefits he had in view were these,—that the sufferers would for the future be more cautious whom they trusted, and his son be enabled to get a smaller degree of credit.

Questionable as this conduct may be considered, it was the height of perfection compared with that which his lady wife practised upon her own daughters. My Lord allowed to his better half a certain sum of no very

gigantic extent for household arrangements, dressing, &c. and my Lady Stoneley a very very modest part of the same to her girls, who having ventured to exceed the limit and complain of its small extent, she undertook to guard them against this error for the future, not by increasing the allowance, nothing of the sort, but by decreeing that in future they should walk out with the governess in shabby bonnets, with gowns to match, and not unfrequently it has been whispered with one of their lady's maid's shawls on, in order that they might thus unsuspectedly visit cheap shops and secure bargains! And this to be tolerated in the daughters of a man who never scrupled or hesitated at five hundred guineas for some dubious piece of dirty canvas, or a hundred pounds for some foolish painted pot, which any careless servant might reduce to its primeval worthlessness.

It must however be confessed, that when Lord Stoneley gave a party, all the world were present, and no expense was spared. His rooms were crowded by a host of people who

cared not one rush for their owner, nor he for them; while for the delight of these strangers, who smiled at his folly even in the act of enjoying its prodigality, he expended in profusion that gold, of which his own blood but one degree removed were even then in absolute want.

To be sure the admiration or affection of his sons or daughters would have been insipid to the ear that delighted to drink in the soft praises of the Earl of Snooks, or Sir John Snob, people who when they left his house would utterly forget him and he them; but then this ministered to his vanity, and self was so ruling a passion that he chose to indulge it at any cost. To express an opinion of such a character would be to exhaust one's contempt; a very impolitic expenditure of a quality that the world keeps in such constant demand from us.

Having turned his daughters out of the room, Lord Stoneley proceeded to inform his wife that Horace had entirely come into their views,—a strong emphasis was laid on the word *their*,—and that he had kindly consented that Lady Siberia should become his wife. Her

Ladyship having warmly thanked him for this indulgence of the parental feelings, the worthy trio, father, mother, and son, next proceeded to hold a consultation as to the best method of fulfilling their generous and philanthropic designs towards the niece of an old friend.

As yet Horace had to make his first acquaintance with the lady; and the mother, with the true worldly spirit of her nature, expressed a very decided opinion, that on the mode and manner of this first introduction a great deal, if not every thing, depended. Horace, who, it may be seen, was not without a modest notion of his own merits, by no means went the length of his worthy mother. He was ready, he kindly said, to guarantee a perfect triumph, let the meeting take place how, when, and where it might.

"My dear boy," said the Lady Stoneley, "I am afraid you calculate too easily. I am perfectly aware that no one can doubt the fact of your being without exception the handsomest man in London; that you have been admitted for many seasons: no one can be more ready

to admit the truth than I am; but still let me beg of you not on that account to throw carelessly away any other incidental advantage that may occur. Remember, this is no ordinary conquest; and every possible inducement that can be offered to the girl from other parties will be tried to gain her. Profit by my experience. You can't imagine with young women how far a first impression goes, and if it does nothing more, it smooths all future difficulties from the path; and girls who have once been favourably impressed, put at least a kind interpretation on every subsequent part of a lover's conduct that may come under their notice."

Urged by these weighty considerations, Horace gave way with the air of a martyr. Her Ladyship was allowed to remain in possession of the argument, and it was finally agreed, *nem. con.* that Horace's introduction should take place at a fancy dress ball, where this perfection of London swains should come out in the handsomest—the most unique—in short, the most perfectly Lady-Siberia-killing

dress, that the mind of the Honourable Captain could devise, or the skill of his tailor execute.

In the mean time, the anxious mother, having complained that there was a little want of colour in the cheeks of her Adonis, peremptorily insisted that he should repair to the salubrious regions of Hampton Court, coming thence daily, by gentle rides to town, to inspect the advancement of his singular park of artillery, to wit, the aforesaid fancy dress, which was a mixture of the Grecian, Turkish, Persian, Tunisian, Indian style. In fact, a perfect blaze of gold and jewels, and prismatic colours, with the most thorough contempt for chronology and costume.

In the mean while the unsuspecting victim of these manœuvres, had accompanied Sir George to return Lord Stoneley's visit, and having received an invitation for the masquerade, our friends now announced their ability to accept, and be present at it; Lady Siberia remarking, that she had only received the invitation as she was getting into her carriage, but that on her return she would write, and send a more formal acceptation of it.

"Oh! my dear Lady Siberia," interposed Lady Stoneley, in the most maternal mode; "formal! I beg you won't ever think of any thing formal connected with us, my dear Lady Siberia. You know we are relations, or at least (this was added modestly) family connexions; and as to form, I do assure you nothing can be more wanting in form than the whole of our little evening re-union in question. My dear girls there (the dear creatures!) wished for a little dance, and so Lord Stoneley and myself —Lord Stoneley, you know, is particularly partial to art, and therefore fond of any thing that has a little colouring—I say, therefore, we both thought that the dresses would enliven the room, but I am afraid you will find it very triste and stupid. If my son Horace now had been in town, he would have helped us to get it up in a more finished manner; he was very fond of studying costume with his father when a boy, and indeed altogether his taste is faultless; but then you know I speak with a mother's partial feelings."

"Oh! indeed! is your son, Captain Horace

not in town, Lady Stoneley? Some one told me they had seen him in the Park."

Lady Stoneley's brow began to darken. She had given strict injunctions to her daughters that they were by no means to betray the secret of Adonis's appearance in London. The wily mother having determined to bring down the whole force of her son's premeditated charms upon her bewildered gaze, as a perfect *coup-de-surprise*. Full well she knew how these things tell on youthful hearts, and she was determined, that even if her son chose to throw away a single chance, she at any rate would not follow his example. It was therefore a sort of death-blow to her plots, when Lady Siberia mentioned the fact of her knowing that the Honourable Captain had been in London. She, however, regained all her courage, when in the next breath Siberia, little thinking how her slightest words were weighed, proceeded to remark—"I really feel very sorry, Lady Stoneley, to find that he is out of town; for I hear he is very handsome;—indeed, I met some ladies at a party a few

evenings since, whom I consider to
perfect state of raving about him."

"How very absurd," said Lady S
with a gratified smile, and she certainl
have begun to like our heroine, had
possible she could have liked any th
herself; "if you have heard such a
Lady Siberia, of my simple-hearted h
must be prepared, if ever you should m
for a very great disappointment; he
about as good-looking as the gener
young men. I say, if ever you shou
him, for I grieve to tell you I am in gr
row about him, poor fellow!!"

"Indeed! Why so?" demanded
really entertaining considerable con
for any affliction that could touch a m
a being whose loss she had so much re
and so deeply felt, and over whose u
fate she herself had shed so many
tears.

"Alas!" replied Lady Stoneley, "I
will have to go to India, and the clima
fatal, and Horace possesses so many

qualities of mind and heart, that indeed, indeed——" Here came another sigh from the profound abyss; then, as if she could trust herself to speak no further, she slightly changed the subject, remarking—"the younger son, it seems, is ever doomed to be the mother's pet; but whatever son Horace had been, I am sure I should have felt just as foolish.—Won't you take a glass of wine? I see by the dial that our lunch has just gone in, and I know you will excuse my want of form in asking you and Sir George to come down with us."

CHAPTER XVII.

When we hear so much stress laid upon the good looks of any individual party, the natural inquiry arises, how far such stress on a matter so entirely one of opinion, is justified by the object of it. Tried by this test, severe as it undoubtedly is, we hardly know that any judges would refrain from admitting the strong claims of the Honourable Captain Horace. In figure he was perfect, or at any rate fully as much so as it is fair to expect from any mortal; his height was barely under six feet, while his chest was capacious, his limbs well developed, the waist and hips small, the hands and feet exquisitely formed; the head set upon a beautiful neck, and round and small in its shape. In fact, his

personal appearance would, beyond doubt, have laid him open to the charge of effeminacy, had it not been redeemed from this fault by a remarkably handsome set of features, dark almost as an Egyptian's, including fine aquiline nose, a beautifully chiselled mouth, a perfect set of teeth, and most magnificent black whiskers and moustaches. How then, physiognomists will enquire, how then did it happen, that with such a face, principle was so sadly wanting? We will explain. From those who have not studied that voucher of the human mind, the countenance, Horace's appearance would have won all that regard and attention, which good looks seldom fail to gain, but the real physiognomist would never have been misled in mistaking the heart from its outward index; the eye, though quick and full of fire, was found, on closer examination, to be nearly round in the form of its eye-lids, and small in the size, a sure indication of great cunning, and proportionate want of heart; while a close glance at the forehead would have detected that both its height and width were owing to a part of the hair being

kept closely shaved, at the top and sides; the head, moreover, appeared to possess part of its beauty, from the beautifully rounded preponderance behind, instead of in front, a conformation very pleasing to the eye, but fatal to the intellect of the possessor; however, it was altogether of too small a mould to hold out much warranty of the mind being equal to the person, while the lips, though small and delicately cut, were of that thin compressed shape that is generally the accompaniment of a mean disposition; still, it must be confessed, that, to a great majority of mankind unaccustomed to this anatomical treatment of the visage, Horace would have passed, as indeed he very generally did, for one of the handsomest men of his day, and when his parents laid such stress on his good looks, they treated this party's possessions in much the same style as they would any valuable farm on his lordship's estate, namely, as an object very much in request, and whether worth anything or not, still a possession that was only to be bartered for some consideration equally valu-

able, and, to a certain extent, they made no miscalculation. Few, indeed, of the inexperienced young women, who are generally the highest bidders in this market, would have failed to have set down the honourable Horace at a considerable value. All the general accessaries of manner and breeding, had been drilled into him in his youth, he danced beautifully, walked admirably, and talked ball-room conversation to a miracle.

His two strong points, certainly, were dress, which he studied intensely, and manner, for which he appeared to have a natural genius; his cunning, was incalculable; he always waited till he could give some pretty shrewd guess at the taste and character of each new party, to whom he was introduced, and then on this information he modelled his own sentiments, manner, and conduct; in dissimulation he inherited all his mother's gifts, and those the reader, after what he has seen, will agree to have been neither few nor slight. Whatever might be asserted by those he wished to win, he was ever ready to applaud and agree with it. However

absurd or ridiculous the notions of his prey, not a breath of censure nor dissent ever crossed his lips to correct or set the wanderer right. We must do him the justice to say also, that principle stood in his way as little as in that of most folks, and if any point were to be gained by *coup de main*, he was always ready to achieve it at any price. We, therefore, leave our friends to imagine whether our hero had not rather a dangerous rival, when the honourable Horace, with all the accompaniments of beauty, rank, station, and opportunity, sat down before the fortress of Lady Siberia's charms:—and with this prefatory description, we will now proceed to the talked-of ball, and see how the plot against her peace and happiness succeeded.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Lady Stoneley's house was, as we have said, in Berkeley Square, and after several long and difficult consultations with that man of taste and virtù, her husband, every thing was arranged in the most magnificent style.

The night arrived, and so did the company, and the latter not being much more than six times as many as the rooms could hold, every one was extremely delighted, as every one was extremely hot, and every one as extremely stupid as could possibly be desired; such, however, being the fashion, in which pleasure is only to be found, no one seemed to doubt that this was as rational a mode of spending their time, which to be sure was not of much consequence, and of spending their money, a matter more to the purpose, as could be by them devised.

More especially the noble host and hostess were crammed, and jostled from one end of their rooms to the other, in the most perfect state of self-approbation; all their visitors whom they did know, and these were very nearly one-third of the number present, rang into their ears a perpetual peal of their own praises, mingled with the most excessive admiration for the scene around. Certainly every thing that money could accomplish had been done. How little could a stranger, coming into those crowded rooms, have imagined that all this display was got up merely for the purpose of adding to their store—of catching a poor unfortunate fly in the treacherous meshes of their gilded web, of dooming a young creature with all the noble emotions that warmed the generous but eccentric heart of Lady Siberia, to be the prey of such a soul-less butterfly, as the honourable Horace?

Amidst all the glitter of inlaid vases, gilded porcelain, carved ivorys, jewelled cups, sculptured porphyry, buhl marketry, golden armour, antique statues, gleaming alabaster, waving

feathers, rustling satins, Italian singers, chosen orchestras, perfumed breezes, lovely faces, voluptuous figures, glittering costume, diamonds that outshone the sun, and eyes that made those brilliants dull,—beside them all, one heart at least, nourished a deadly care, it was that of Lady Stoneley herself. Her daughters, unfortunate girls, had been posted at the principal doorways, charged like frigates in a fleet, with an important duty; to wit, that, of reporting to their mother the instant arrival of the heiress. Midnight, however, had struck, and the expected fair one, she for whom all this bustle and parade had been undertaken, had not yet made her appearance.

She might be taken ill, or still worse, she might have taken literally, the explanation Lady Stoneley had given of the party; namely, that it was a mere informal meeting of friends. There was a degree of agony that accompanied this notion of her own diplomacy—on which she had so congratulated herself—going against her, that almost surpassed the pangs of the Grecian boy beneath the fangs of the stolen fox.

But, bearing an heroic front of becks and nods, and wreathed smiles to all around her, this degree of virtue, doubtless, proved its own reward, for a few seconds afterwards, her eldest daughter brought her the golden intelligence, that the heiress had at last arrived.

This most entrancing piece of news, reached her ladyship in a most gentle, proper, and subdued whisper, as she stood in one of her own bay windows. The ray of joy that gleamed through her aristocratic countenance expressed far more quickly, than any words could have done, her delight at this information.

"Now, where is Horace?"—was her brief but pertinent demand, as she instantly moved forward to the grand entrance, to welcome the long expected guest.

"Really I don't know, mamma," answered the sister; "I am afraid he has given her up in despair, but I hope he has not gone out, nor do I think he has yet changed his dress."

"Gone out! changed his dress?" repeated the mother, with a degree of animation which shewed that even she could sometimes warm

into excitement; "Impossible, where is Lady Siberia?"

"I don't know by which door she came into the rooms, and therefore I can't say whereabouts she is, in such a crowd."

"Of course they would show her to this room, child; do use your eyes."

But though the child did use her eyes and to a very considerable purpose, as an enamoured youth, who stood not far off, did well conceive, she would have used them with extraordinary cleverness, had she detected our heroine from where she stood.

Lady Siberia had been ushered by the servants towards the large room, but having, like most sensible people, a profound antipathy to being paraded into an assembly, like a peacock into a dairy yard, she quietly availed herself of two stained glass doors, that led into a small kind of melange, between a drawing-room, boudoir, and conservatory, and while the footman bawled her own and her uncle's titles, through the main portal, they modestly mingled in the crowd, through the lesser one.

Lady Stoneley heard the name shouted, and leaving her daughter to push forward, gained the spot, where our heroine ought to have been. Unable here to trace out any one like our friends, she questioned the servant stationed at the door; but, unable to obtain any solution of Siberia's mysterious disappearance, turned back to give some orders to her elder daughter, and in so doing, to her inexpressible delight, beheld the second one advancing with her brother Horace.

"Here, my dear boy," whispered the virtuous parent, to her "simple-hearted" son, "she is come at last, but in what part of the rooms they are, I know not: go you with Blanche, and see if you can discover her in that direction, pointing to the one in which they had really entered, and if you meet them, Blanche will introduce you, this is to save time; contrive if you can, that she shall dance as little with any body else as possible; if I should meet her in this part of the mob, I will be sure to engage her for you, now child, follow me."

The high contracting parties here interchanged sundry nods, and separated; in a few minutes Blanche came running back to her mother, to enquire what dress Lady Siberia wore, since being very near-sighted, she was quite certain she should not be able otherwise to recognize her features.

"Oh! you cannot mistake her, she is so beautiful; do make haste, child, she may have had some other partner thrust upon her before you can get to her rescue; she wears, I remember now, she told me the dress of a Greek empress."

"Admirable," whispered Horace, as he heard this intelligence, "I could not have more admirably suited my turn-out if I had tried,"—glancing down at the superb array of silks, satins, velvets, and jewels, which he had combined to dazzle and enslave our fair heroine, in the character of the effeminate warrior Sardanapalus.

In a few minutes Blanche contrived to espy the star-spangled breast of the gallant Sir George Auberville, "There Horace, there is Sir

George," said the kind-hearted sister, who naturally enough fell into the scheme that was to bring a rich bride to a favourite brother, whose kindness of manner was magnified into virtue, and whose vices were all hidden by the partiality of relationship.

"Is that Sir George with the star on his breast? then there is the Greek empress leaning on his arm, and by Jove, Blanche, her beauty has not been exaggerated; come, come along, by heaven we are in sight of the prize at last." Pressing through the numerous bowing acquaintances around, Blanche soon succeeded in attracting the eye of Sir George Auberville, who stepping forward, and grasping her hand with his usual gallantry and warmth, motioned, with his left arm, to the beautiful Greek empress, whom he had left a step behind him; what he said was drowned by the clangour of the orchestra, who just then gave one of those violent flourishes with which they inspirit the toes, and try the ears of ball-room frequenters.

Blanche, however, guessing that it had

some allusion to Lady Siberia, it did not signify what, and wishing to be polite, she answered at a hazard :—

"Yes, I know, and I come to claim her as a partner for my brother;" these words were as much addressed to the Lady, as they were to Sir George; since the former had by this time gained the latter's side, while Adonis, stepping forward to his sister's aid and assistance, Blanche pointed to her brother in the introductory style.

"My brother, Captain Horace Hartlesse;"—Captain Horace made a profound bow, the Greek empress, a corresponding curtsey; and the former, putting out his hand, asked to be honoured with her's for the next dance.

Something not very distinct was answered in reply; the Greek empress looked up at the Post-Captain, but the eye of the latter was that moment turned on Blanche, and Horace, thoroughly skilled in observation, guessing that his companion wished in some degree to ask leave of her uncle, adroitly prevented this by pretending that a new set was now waiting

for their appearance, and thus hurried her through the crowd before Sir George could interpose, not merely a word, but even a look.

This, in truth, he very quickly tried, and turning round to espy the retreat of the Captain, Blanche took that opportunity to dart off, and make a favourable report to her commander-in-chief. Sir George now finding himself left alone, bestowed a few choice blessings upon the eyes and limbs of all modern politeness; which, as it was not uttered in a distinguishable tone, we do not care to repeat: he then moved on to see if in some other quarter of this raree-show box, he could not stumble on some old brother officer to cheer the sorrows of a male wall-flower.

CHAPTER XIX.

It may easily be imagined that among the crowded rooms, we have attempted to describe, it was no difficult matter to move quickly; by the time, therefore, that Blanche reached the side of her mother, and conveyed the cheering intelligence that Horace had secured the heiress, at least a quarter of an hour had elapsed.

"Did she make any remark, when she saw you?" demanded the cautious Lady Stoneley, who expected that the country novice, high stiled, and wealthy though she was, should have been somewhat astounded at the peculiar style distinguishing *her* turn-out of a few friends without any formality. "Are you quite sure she said nothing, made no remark?"—Lady Stoneley dared not go further than this,

it would have been even to her own daughter the height of vulgarity.

Blanche, however, explained Lady Siberia's extraordinary silence on this interesting subject, by saying she had hardly time to speak to her, before Horace led her off to dance; this pacified the mother, and the prudent commander-in-chief, content that her surbordinate officers had fulfilled their duties for the night, rewarded them, by saying, "Now, my dear girls, you may go and dance yourselves."—Of this permission Blanche availed herself at once, and was out of sight in an instant, Henrietta unfortunately paused to ask some questions at the side of her mother; when the latter, with a start of horror, which all her breeding could not disguise, and a grasp of her daughter's arm, that left it black and blue on the following morning, exclaimed, "Good heavens, child, what do I see before me?"

"What mother?" replied Henrietta, struggling in pain to rescue her arm, and momentarily expecting to see the ghost of murdered Banquo rise through a trap door, in the saloon.

"That foolish girl, Blanche, is always sure, with her wilful stupidity, which she will mistake for simplicity, to be the ruin of all my plans. Horace is not dancing with Lady Siberia; what can she have done? see, there is the heiress, dancing with some other man: thank heaven! it is an elderly one! Who can it—must it be? do my eyes deceive me! Speak, Henrietta, can it be possible I see the Duke of Diddlebury here? It cannot be, he never yet was in my set.—I would not have asked him for the world! Speak, child, is it him, or is it not? have you heard his name announced this evening?"

"No, Mamma, I am sure I have not."

"But is it him?"

"Why, I think not; but as I do not know him when I see him, you had better not rely on my opinion."

"So I should think: could you not have told me that before; do find out somebody who knows him. It certainly must be the Duke, or a stranger so like him that my fears have deceived me. Such an extraordinary likeness!

Oh! I shall die, if you keep me in this agony and doubt much longer!"

And the tortured mother, struggling to wear the bland ball-room aspect on her smooth forehead, was biting her lips, and grasping her fan with ten-fold energy, to enable her to sustain the placid part.

"Well, my dear Lady Stoneley, how are you this evening?" said a bluff good-hearted voice at her elbow. She turned round, and there stood Sir George Auberville.

"Ah! my dear Sir George," replied the elegant hostess, exchanging for the most bland and languishing accents, her late half-smothered voice of deep rage and excited disappointment; "but you are very late in coming you know!—have you come alone?"

"Alone, my dear Lady Stoneley! why I have brought the whole tribe of Manasseh with me, with the slight exception, that neither they nor their forefathers ever saw Israel. Alone, egad, no! The Duke of Diddlebury was dining with me to-day, so I took the liberty of bringing him."

"Oh! the Duke of Diddlebury, indeed! he is a great favourite of mine as a public character, and though I have not the pleasure of knowing him in private, yet, believe me, I should be most happy to do so for your sake, Sir George; pray introduce him to me."

"I will, I will, as soon as I can lay hold of him, but at present he is somewhere cutting capers with my niece."

"Dancing, is he, Sir George? why I thought the Duke had given up dancing years since."

"Fie, fie, Lady Stoneley! now I declare you are really wicked; positively malicious; why you know the Duke is at least fifteen years my junior, and I strenuously promise myself the pleasure of a dance with one of the beauties of the night, as soon as ever I have the good fortune to find that Lady Stoneley's hand is disengaged,"—and the gallant Baronet raised the fair fingers to his lips, and kissed them with infinite devotion; the furious owner all the while smiling most benignly, yet longing at the same time to snatch them from his grasp, and box them heartily about his ears.

"Oh! Sir George, you are such a dear flatterer, like all the rest of your sex—old fool!" this was muttered between her teeth to Henrietta, "old dotard!—where did you say was my favourite, the Duke of Diddlebury?"

"There he is dancing directly opposite to us."

"And is that dear Lady Siberia dancing with him? how well she looks to-night; what is her dress pray meant to represent?"

This was a most malicious thrust, intended to reach the very gizard of Sir George, but the simple-hearted veteran never dreaming of any intended ill-nature, answered the question as it came, by saying:—

"That is the dress of the Greek empress, Theodosia. Siberia and a young friend of her's, who is staying with us, Miss James—and whom, by the bye, I took the liberty of bringing, by way of even ballast to the Duke—determined, dear little gipseys, to come in the same dresses; and as far as dress goes, you could scarcely tell one from the other. She is dancing in the other room; a devilish fine handsome

fellow ran off with her. It was your son I think; yet I did not see how that could be, knowing he was out of town. Your daughter Blanche introduced him."

"Ah! indeed, Miss James? oh! she is of a very old Scotch family, is she not?"

"No—no—I—never heard that her family was older than the generality of folks."

"Ah! what is it then I have heard of her; she has a great fortune, has she?"

"No—no—her fortune is very moderate, I believe, but she is exceedingly beautiful."

"Oh! fie, fie, Sir George! how can you throw such tempting perils in the path of my dear susceptible romantic Horace? But it is like your kindness to bring this beauteous flower to grace my humble rooms. Ah! dear Sir George, no wonder you heroes are so dangerous to us poor women, when you unite in your own characters all that is heroic in yourselves, with all that is generous towards others.—Henrietta," bending down to her daughter's ear, "do you keep this impertinent old wretch in play, while I go and get Horace away from the

beggarly dependant that he has thought fit to foist upon us; you see that idiot Blanche has played us one of her usual tricks, and ruined all! If Lady Siberia's dance is over before I get back, engage her for a friend of mine; don't say who, and contrive by some management or other to prevent this old marplot from telling his niece that my son is in the room."

Then turning to the unconscious veteran, "Dear Sir George, I know you will excuse me; the duties of a hostess are ubiquitous. Poor Henrietta, here, is rather faint this evening, will you lend her your arm? Don't wander far from this, I will soon be back,—you know I could not stay away long from you, Sir George, even if I wished it."

CHAPTER XX.

With a flushed brow and eager eye, Lady Stoneley hurried through the various groups of her visitors, in hopes to come up with her "poor deluded son," and the "beggarly dependant."

In such a "mob," however, as she had rightly called it, the task was not a little difficult; at last she espied Adonis afar off, far, far beyond the possibility of her reaching him for at least ten good minutes.

Alas, what amount of mischief might not her dear romantic Horace accomplish in ten minutes to his fair prospects! It was enough to drive her frantic to think of it. Elbowing aside Earls, Countesses, and Lady Marys, by the dozen, with a whole herd of less distinguished

revellers, she at last got sufficiently near to behold this treasured hope of the house of Hartlesse, actually bending over the chair in which the "beggarly dependant" was seated, with an air of the utmost deference and respect, wearing out his very best smile, and exhausting the whole strength of his heiress-killing attractions,—in short putting forward the very utmost of all his power. She could have forgiven him for some mere secondary display, something that would have been civil in him, and fascinating to his companion, because she conceived it beneficial to a matrimonial alliance to have a fair report of his qualifications floating about the fair world,—but the idea of her pet son, her dearest hope, being thus deluded into paying, in the eyes of all observers, such deep, such unmistakeable homage to a girl without either family or fortune, was so severe a blow to her maternal feelings, that she always took it to be a marked interposition of the Fates, that she did not swoon away upon the spot; not that she cared much about the want of family in the fair offender, since she was quite convinced

of there being blood enough in the Stoneley veins to have ennobled a whole Noah's ark, if requisite.

Could some magic power, like the fearful hand of Babylon, have traced in legible characters upon the ceiling of Lady Stoneley's saloon, the startling fact that her son was now rendering his liveliest devotions to the sister of a lad who, but a brief space since, had been the chief ornament and support of a cobbler's stall, in a small fishing village,—to a girl who, herself had, within the same interval, been the inmate of a House of Charity, and dependant for the very bread she ate upon the cold and capricious hand of a stranger's bounty,—could these facts, we say, have been made known to the hostess, what vain barrier of police, what idle notions of society,—nay, even what power of the decalogue could have withheld Lady Stoneley from instantly stabbing to the heart, the "dear Sir George,"—with a silver fork at least?

Not that, by alluding to these palpable truths, we mean to convey any censure, either on the gallant Baronet or his lovely niece

Sir George now considered Anna simply as the sister of a young naval officer, as such she shared the hospitality of his own table, and was therefore, he contended, perfectly admissible to any circle of society in which he was himself received.

Knowing that unportioned girls are generally allowed, however beautiful, to move through the world with as much quietude and stillness as the most retired disposition can desire, Sir George conceived that no notice would be taken of his niece's humble friend; she would, he thought, excite no attention, and therefore create no mischief; while the scene was one that would amuse her, and from the crowd of dresses one also that might not occur immediately again, and, in short, that there could be no harm in taking her to Lady Stoneley's house, more especially as it was not his purpose to introduce her to any one. How far these notions were correct we have seen.

At last Lady Stoneley succeeded in getting behind her son, and touching him by the sleeve, while she still stood in a spot whence Anna

could not perceive her, she whispered in the ear of the romantic Horace,—

"Infatuated boy! What are you doing?"

Whereupon the infatuated boy, though somewhat startled at the appellation, placed the back of his hand in a protecting position between his lips and his mother's ear, and in the same endearing tone, replied,—

"Doing? Why, doing the heiress very considerably."

"No," whispered back the mother, "you are doing nothing of the sort; you have been most completely betrayed. You are not talking to the heiress;—that blind little idiot Blanche has introduced you to a pennyless creature—a poor dependant, without either family or fortune, whom Sir George has dared to bring here. I must take you away this instant, and introduce you to the real Lady Siberia."

"But, my dear mother, I am engaged for the next dance."

"After doomsday you may fulfil the engagement." And having given this deter-

mined answer, Lady Stoneley slipped round behind Anna's chair, and then coming, as if from another part of the rooms, thus addressed her "noble-hearted" boy—

"My dear Horace, do present me to your beautiful partner."

"My mother, Lady Stoneley," said Horace, waving his hand towards that respected parent, but feeling somewhat embarrassed, from not knowing what the real name of his late partner was, he stopped short.

His mother detected this in an instant, and supplying the deficiency, proceeded with her usual truthfulness of character, to add—"My dear Miss James, believe me, I am truly delighted to see you here; I have been telling Sir George Auberville how much a hostess is indebted to friends who bring to their rooms ornaments so distinguished as charms like your's."

Conversation of this species was so entirely new to Anna, that she innocently took Lady Stoneley for a most kind-hearted person, and feeling herself utterly incompetent to make

any reply suitable to so elegant a speech, she bowed, blushed, and said nothing; while Lady Stoneley proceeded, "So, you have been dancing with Horace, have you? I always find the sly fellow is sure to have the prettiest girl in the room for his partner, but I must take him away from you now to introduce him to my dear friend, Lady Siberia."

"But, my dear mother," interposed Horace, with a touch of art that did the fullest justice to the family talent for acting; "I have just secured the delight of Miss James's hand for the next dance."

"Fie, fie, Captain Horace, I can't think of indulging you in any such glaring impropriety; besides, Lady Siberia is waiting for you, and if Miss James will only sit still where she is, I will send my daughter to her with one of the best partners in the room."

"Oh! do go, Captain Horace, I beg; I pray you don't stay a moment on my account," said Anna, very needlessly wasting much valuable breath; while the Captain, taking her at an instant's notice, both he and his

worthy mother were off like a shot, almost before Anna had got to the end of her sentence.

For once, fate really did seem to smile upon Lady Stoneley's plots. Darting as rapidly as possible through the rooms, she found Lady Siberia just taking a seat, and the enamoured Duke of Diddlebury tendering her an ice. Summoning a look of the most imperturbable good nature, her sunniest smile, and most honeyed tone of voice, the hostess gently laid her jewelled finger upon the faultless arm of our heroine, and when the latter, in one of Diddlebury's best periods, looked up to see who demanded her attention, Lady Stoneley, pretending to be utterly unconscious of having offered to his Grace's comment the slightest interruption, remarked—

"Dear Lady Siberia, will you do me the favour to dance with a friend of mine the next set."

"Why, Lady Stoneley, I fear it is impos—" Then glancing round and starting suddenly, as her eye rested on the handsome figure and

striking countenance of the youth that was evidently waiting to be introduced to her, the words died on Siberia's lips, and while the colour on her cheek heightened to a beautiful excess, she suddenly corrected herself—"unless it is a very particular friend of yours, for I fear I am half engaged for the next set to his Grace."

"Nay, then," returned her Ladyship, now directing her whole artillery of smiles on the noble wearer of the garter,—"I know I can count upon the Duke of Diddlebury's gallantry; I am sure he never will have the cruelty to monopolize the beauty of the night for two dances running;—and not to mention that the gentleman for whom I plead is not only a particular, but a most particular friend."

"I beg, Lady Siberia, that my humble hopes may not stand at all in the way," said the Duke, in that simple unaffected manner, which sits so well upon distinguished personages.

"Then, Lady Stoneley, I shall be most happy;"—and the sparkle in our heroine's eye proclaimed that she at any rate was using the unadorned truth.

"A thousand thanks," whispered the delighted mother, bending low, and throwing into her manner all the witchery that people so accustomed to society frequently command. Then leading the romantic Adonis forward by one hand, she continued in the same *soto voce*, "He is rather a particular friend, I confess. Have you ever met before?—my son Horace, Lady Siberia?"

"Your son!! Lady Stoneley," echoed Siberia, with a degree of vivid emotion that at once repaid the scheming mother for all the plotting she had gone through,—"I thought your son was not in town."

"He arrived, most happily, last night. I hoped you would like to meet, and so I persuaded him to stay over our little party; for though brief as the time was to prepare, I was sure his taste, at a moment's notice, would select a dress quite as appropriate as any other person's with a fortnight's choice."

"I at any rate fully subscribe to that opinion,"—and our heroine cast an eye of gratify-

ing approval over the magnificent and laboured appointments of Adonis.

"Whoever the happy persons may be who gain your plaudits, my dear Lady Siberia, they at any rate possess the dictum of the best judge in the court," returned the mother; and, confident that she had produced the effect intended, she now left the susceptible Horace to fight his own campaign as he best might.

This, perhaps, was the most prudent course to take, and one by which Adonis was by no means slow to profit.

As long as our heroine remained seated, and the Duke offering his admiration on the right hand, Horace, restrained by the Noble Peer's presence, could only bring one half of his artillery to bear. As soon, however, as the dance commenced, he felt himself at liberty to pursue his own tactics on the larger scale. These were no ordinary-minded rules for winning any young school-girl, but consummately framed from long observation and deep cunning, to help him in adapting his style precisely to the object he was attempting to win.

With a shallow-pated person the usual round of sentimentalities and covered approaches towards the one pervading subject of youth—"young love," would have been had recourse to, to infect Lady Siberia with similar softness.

The Captain had studied the disposition of his victim too well; nothing half so lack-a-daisical—nothing that in the least approached to, or sympathized with it, escaped him; his conversation was a clever echo of her own. He played the lake to Narcissus, and if the mirror of his thoughts reflected any image, it bore the impress of her beauty, heightened with the witchery and polish of a light and tone that she had never yet seen it invested with before.

Powerful as was her judgment and ability, this was an intoxication for which she was wholly unprepared, and to which she therefore swiftly fell a prey; while Horace, having won from her a promise of her hand for the set immediately succeeding that due to the Duke of Diddlebury,—handed her to her seat, and as he did so, she admitted to herself, with

pleasure, that Captain Horace certainly was quite as handsome as report affirmed him to be; and still more, that he had proved himself by far the most agreeable person she had conversed with in London.

CHAPTER XXI.

Poor Charles! At this juncture what imminent peril hung over his fate. His was no ordinary heart, from which to-morrow may efface the impressions of to-day. His whole sum of earthly happiness was bound up in his passionate devotion to Lady Siberia, and his determination to perish rather than give up the hope of being one day able to declare himself to her without shame. But now the whole issue of this love was trembling in the balance! Could he have seen the warm feelings into which Lady Siberia had been surprised for Captain Horace, he would have been filled with despair! Could he have known the mercenary motives that led Adonis on, rage would not have been strong enough to characterize

his feelings against him! As for Lady Siberia, she had advisedly thrown herself in the way of this peril, and so far from seeing through the unworthy artifices by which she was sought to be made a mere mule to bear the golden panniers into the leaguered city of the Stoneley tribe, she, by the mistaken reasoning of her own mind, lent considerable assistance to the plot; she seeing in Adonis one of the very persons whom she had come to London expressly to have an opportunity of observing; one of those who, by greater personal advantages and undoubted birth, could throw into immeasurable discount the pale image of that sea-haunting youth, who had so unaccountably taken possession of her fancy, amid the stillness and repose of the country.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Siberia, as she gained her dressing-room, "I have conquered that folly at last; I shall now think of him no more, or if so, only to contrast him to disadvantage with the hero of to-night, and smile at the insanity that ever permitted such an image to torment me! it could only have

been the solitude of that melancholy sea village, to which nothing shall ever tempt me to direct my steps again. At any rate, I am now safe beyond the reach of any such degrading phantasy.

"Why, my dear Lady Siberia, what induces you to be talking thus loudly to yourself?" inquired Anna, at this moment entering, and laying down on her friend's toilet-table the jewels Siberia had lent her for that evening.

"Ah! Anna, love! Are you there?" replied our heroine, feeling thus, as it were, rebuked for her late thoughts, by the presence of Charles's sister. The two friends now drew round the cheerful fire, and naturally went into the whole merits of the ball just over. They both agreed as to its splendour, and both also coincided that the star of the night was certainly Captain Horace. It was true, that on comparing notes, there were one or two brilliancies which the gallant officer appeared to have uttered, first to the sham, and then to the real Greek Empress; and it must also be

confessed, that if Siberia felt favourably inclined to recognize the Captain's pretensions, poor Anna did so still more. Her soft and gentle appearance had induced the Captain to come forth with a much more loving and tender strain of converse than he had dared to use to the dark-haired and fiery-eyed Siberia. To Anna also the finished polish and well-acted deference of the worthy youth were wholly new. The Captain's were the first lips that had ever undisguisedly proffered homage to her, and as she fully admitted all his blandishments, perhaps she was in a more dangerous position than her friend.

Leaving all matters thus progressing with the ladies, we will now turn to the proceedings of the conquering hero, who so lately played the gentleman, although he scarcely acted it.

CHAPTER XXII.

HAVING to a certain degree recorded the sentiments of the two ladies, in whom we are most interested, touching the long-planned ball, and the party for whom it was chiefly given, to wit, the amiable and all-conquering Captain Horace, let us next enquire what were the impressions formed by the gallant hero, himself, as to the assembly in question. Somewhere at the hour of three on the succeeding day, he was aroused from his slumbers by a well known voice at his bed-side, insisting that he should immediately rise and have some breakfast; on looking up, the beautiful youth beheld standing near his pillow Lord Hubert Scapegrace.

"Oh! Hubert, my boy, are you there?" said Horace to his brother officer, who was, more-

over, his sworn ally in every possible mischief he could perpetrate: "just take the trouble, will you, to ring the bell and order my fellow to make the tea, and I will turn out. I wanted to see you, my boy; my brown mare, Lady Betty, has got a little puffiness in her near hind foot, and our veterinary hound pretends to say she must be turned out to grass. It is a devil of a nuisance to have one's favourite horse put on the sick list in that way; she will get as rough as a badger; besides, he says, she won't be able to come up for a fortnight."

"Oh! well, I will look to it.—I dare say it is mere over-feeding; a day or two's rest, some liquid blistering, and a few bundles of vetches, will set her all to rights."

"Do you think so, my dear fellow? upon my soul you take an immense load off my mind: Oh! and by the way, I thought there was something else.—Did you succeed in getting an apology from that vulgar beast, or must I shoot him?"

"Oh! I got a full apology from him; there will be no need of the irons this time. I was

confoundedly vexed that I could not look in at your mother's rout, until so late this morning, that you had gone off, they said, to bed."

"Oh! they said so of course, and so I did come up to my room, but it was only to change my dress, and then I went off to shake my elbow a little in St. James's Street."

"What, Golden Hell? Had you much fun there?"

"Yes, pretty well, one of our fellows brought in a fresh pigeon; such a glorious bird, with plumage of the most divine and emerald green."

"That's right, did you rook him to any extent worth talking about?"

"Not much, only about eleven thousand pounds."

"What scale of prize money—thirds?"

"Oh! thirds of course, though I shall get devilish little by the matter; for all my share must go towards wiping off the old score."

"Why, aye, you are rather deep in the mire, are you not?"

"A devil of a deal too much so; but I hope

not for long, for my old governor, who shrugs up his shoulders when he talks of my debts, thereby meaning the small tithe of them which he knows any thing about, has put me upon a splendid scent within the last ten days."

"Oh! ah! let us hear about that! The Major and one or two more of ours, were talking the girl over at breakfast, last week, but the Major has always got such an addle-headed notion of a story, that I would not attend to the matter, until I could see you; you saw the girl last night didn't you?"

"Not only did I see her, my boy, but settled her! A perfect little griffin, you know, from the country; you never saw a fish bite more eagerly at the bait; believes everything one says, and all that sort of caper."

"But they tell me she is a remarkably fine sort of woman."

"Oh! yes, of course, so she is; but I should like to see the girl who in your eyes or mine would not appear a fine woman with a rent-roll running from seventeen to twenty thousand a year. I tell you this in confidence, you know,

because as soon as we are married, which will be some five weeks or two months hence, we must give it out as at least sixty; because, as incomes are always trebled by rumour, our fellows will, otherwise, think that I have sold myself cheap for a dirty seven thousand a year, and that would never do."

"Oh! never! But leave all that to me; I'll take care she is not understated in the market."

"Yes, but have a care, my dear fellow, that you don't bid her up till I have walked off with the prize, it brings such a host of flies about the fruit; there are two or three rivals now in the field—just toss me my breeches, my dear fellow!—Thank you;—and among the rest that stupid old fellow, the Duke of Diddlebury; it would be no use taking a shot at him, unless the same ball could cut away half his rent-roll, and knock a hole in his garter. Upon my soul, Hubert, women are almost as great fools as ourselves, in their love of finery and title."

"That is saying a good deal for them, certainly."

"Yes, it is—you are sitting on my dressing gown,—that is it—now come on to the charge of Pekin or Peko, or whatever they term this dark leav'd Chinese rubbish;—yes, it is a singular insanity in women and soldiers. For something less than a quarter of a yard of red ribbon, with a gilt tag at the end of it, which sovereigns are facetiously pleased to call a Companion of the Bath, and the difference between the nickname Major, instead of Captain, you and I would feel delighted to go and cut the throats of ten thousand more or less of the finest fellows in the French army, a matter certainly immaterial enough; but this is not, namely, we should not only be ready to cut their throats, but to get our own sliced in return, a style of slicing most different from that of the ham and beef shops—which are carried on upon the principle of cut and come again."

"Aye! most true, Horatio, once introduce your carotid to a carving knife, or rather a carving knife to your carotid, and the soldier who comes again must do it like the royal Dane by the pale glimpses of the moon."

"So, my fair heiress, tempted by a blue garter and the nickname of Grace, is half inclined to compare and hesitate between Diddlebury's satyr and my Lady mother's sweet Hyperion, by which you will understand my modesty means myself; but the struggle won't be of long continuance. There were one or two dead charges which we made on the enemy's flank last night that produced a most fatal impression; and I saw at once by the confusion in which the foe quitted the field, that it is only necessary to follow up the rear with vigour to ensure a surrender at discretion."

"Oh! my dear fellow, as to that I have no doubt, if you choose to devote yourself to the task, the girl is yours whenever you think fit, or where is the use of your being called Adonis in your regiment? in such a case you would bring everlasting disgrace on the Lancers by defeat."

"Oh! clearly; and between ourselves, if by any folly of mine I should mismanage the matter, nothing could save me from selling out into some low dragoon regiment, and going to India or the devil."

"Oh! don't trouble yourself to draw over-nice distinctions; they are the same thing, only fashion spells them differently."

"Why, aye, precisely; the only thing that I have to fear in the matter, is the having my forces divided."

"Divided, how?"

"In this way; on being introduced to the said heiress, by some mistake or another, they handed me over to the sweetest, fairest, blonde, you ever saw in your life. Hubert; thinking this was the right party, I of course commenced the campaign, *con amore*, quite secure, not only that I should carry all before me, but that I should actually be a little touched and interested in the matter myself; when just as I began to feel that I really could care for the girl, my mother arrived on the field with the disastrous intelligence that I had been engaging a wrong opponent, and all my love and affection, tender vows, enamoured looks, and that sort of caper, went for nothing!"

"Excruciatingly disappointing."

"Quite so; well then, what I fear is this,

that while the fair blonde is perpetually by the side of the dark and more magnificent, though still to me less touching heiress, I shall be in constant danger of waking the tigress in the latter, by wooing the turtle-dove nature of the former."

"Psha! a fig for such a danger! Duty before affection, any day in the week. You make fierce love to the heiress, and as matter of regard for you I'll take the blonde off your hands, while you give your undivided soul to the brunette."

"Excuse me, my boy, you will do nothing of the sort."

"Why? my dear fellow! you can't have them both."

"Pardon me, that is exactly what I do intend to have."

"How can you?"

"Nothing easier! Of course I shall marry the heiress, that is settled, and by keeping up the tender impression in the mind of the gentle blonde, Anna, I think her name is—why as a matter of course, I could not have the cruelty

to allow my marriage to be the means of severing two such bosom friends; then once resident in my wife's house, if the sensitive tenderness of my disposition *should* unfortunately precipitate me into a little liaison with my spouse's confidant, why of course the world would pity and my wife forgive me."

"Egad, that is good! Faith, that is capital! A most luxurious dog; but where the devil are all the brothers, fathers, mothers, and such fry?"

"Pooh! pooh! of course she is a dear delightful orphan; a sort of person formed by destiny for the part I have assigned her. I believe she has a lout of a brother somewhere, but the fellow is well taken care of; he is what they call '*serving his country*'—at sea."

"Ha! ha! ha! that is not so bad; the idea of a man 'serving his country!' Excruciatingly good! Well, you ecrtainly have your amusement cut out for the next season. Take care, my dear fellow, and don't get yourself into what is vulgarly called a scrape. That is, I mean if you do get yourself into a state of

entanglement, don't let it come before the public; for I confess I think there is some immorality in that; it hurts one's self: and now as you have nearly finished breakfast, I will be off. I wish you success in your undertakings."

"Oh! that is sure to accompany me."

"Which of the mare's legs, did you say was the puffy one."

"The near hind."

"Aye! true! so it was: well, I'll take a squint at it."

"Do, my dear fellow, and I'll take a squint at the papers."

Lord Hubert Scapegrace waved his hand as he left the door; and Captain Horace Hartlesse, stretching himself upon the sofa, took his German Meerschaum in one hand, and the Times newspaper in the other, and was soon engaged heart and soul in execrating the conduct of the "unprincipled Whigs," who then, under the guidance of Mr. Fox, were busy devoting their energies to fierce opposition of the "Heaven-born Statesman."

A certain young gentleman who is supposed,

somehow or another, to have contracted some slight knowledge of the world and the human character, promulgates in an odd corner of a little book the following, not altogether pithless observation: "Better to bear the ills we have, than fly to those we know not of."

How little could Lady Siberia, when quitting in disgust the quiet shores of Dawlish, have foreseen into what perils she was not only thrusting herself, but taking also the gentle Anna, when she sought the busy vortex of mankind, "the great Metropolis." Perhaps there never beat in human bosom, a heart more formed to feel with the bitterest anguish the insulting disappointment of being sought only for her gold.

On the other hand, where could the unbridled passions of the vicious, or the profligate, have selected a purer or more unspotted victim, than the confiding and simple-hearted Anna? Yet upon the very verge of such perdition, did they now both tremble, and on how slight an accident might the ruin or the safety of both depend!

CHAPTER XXIII.

"AWAY with such a thing as fear," said Lady Coxcomb to her husband, "what demon in mockery of mankind, could at its birth have thus for ever severed courage into twain? The cannon's mouth, the sword's point, or the musket's flash, leave you as calm as if death was never smiling on your cheek, when they are near; yet this same man, whisper but a breath of what has passed, is the most craven trembler a poltroon can prove."

"It is the worst prerogative of guilt to crush the iron nerve of courage, with its slightest touch! How can you judge this matter? You did not hear his screams for mercy; it was not by your hand he went confiding, affectionate, forgiving, with all his sins upon his head, to

plead before his Maker against a murderer; look how remorse has done threefold the work of years! The cannon's mouth! Well may I smile on that, and cry a welcome to its summons; the horrors I endure in thought, might then experience, what now they never can by night or day, some briefest respite."

"This is mere disease, Sir Henry. If you would keep the digestive organs in a better state, you would escape all this nervous irritation. Am I not steeped to the lips in what you, with so much fustian, will term 'guilt,' and yet do you ever see my sleep disturbed, or the propriety of my conduct driven into extravagance, or violated by such fantasies? As to his cries—I have heard a good fat hen make a much more singular noise in being put out of the world, than ever man did yet! Give me the letter of this busy body, Sir George—what is his long name?"

"Auberville."

"Aye, true, so this is the document that has played the spectre to your jealous senses!"

As Lady Coxcomb said this, she took from

the hand of her pale and trembling spouse a letter in the hand-writing of Sir George Auberville, and with the demeanour of a stoic, and the bitter sarcastic smile of a Mephistophiles, read it, partly to herself, and partly aloud; proceeding the while with the greatest deliberation, as if weighing in her own mind the exact worth and bearing of every sentence, and considering how these applied to the various facts of the case thus:—

"Boy at Dawlish, an orphan boy; Dawlish certainly was the place, that I remember well. 'Charles James the name,'—the name, I will not pretend to recollect, without the papers. Stay, was he not christened by those two names; aye, that would very likely have guided the choice, though imprudent if it did. This meddler, Sir George, mentions no trade, yet I remember well insisting on that security at least.

"He was bound to a trade, the lowest of the low,—my memory serves me there, most perfectly,—surely, from such a deep abasement, even the aspiring blood of Lancaster could

never rise—Never! it cannot be! Delicate, intellectual, and refined; he bears no traces of such humiliation!—and every trade humiliates —much more such a most vile calling; still the account he rendered of himself was not so markedly dissimilar.—This is too serious to be passed lightly by. It seems he has a sister too, the other orphan,—too singular a coincidence to be accidental,—staying in this prater's house, with wealth and influence to back her if required. —But she is nothing, if we remove this youngster from our path,—all is smooth once more. —It must be done! Nothing easier!—Had my councils prevailed throughout, this fellow! —aye indeed,—this were a matter not now remaining to be dealt with.

"Now, Sir Henry," pursued her Ladyship aloud, and fixing her small grey eye upon the bloodshot orb of her husband, that sought the ground, or the surrounding furniture of the cabin, or indeed looked any where to avoid encountering the glance that questioned it,—"I have but one doubt in this business.—Order the boy in here; talk upon some immaterial point,

then break off suddenly, ask him this question point blank, 'Were you ever apprenticed to a shoemaker at Dawlish?'"

"And if he answer, Yes?"

"Then he must die."

"Oh! no, no, that cannot be."

"It must, and shall be."

"What, the lad who, but a few weeks since, at the price of his own blood, and the risk of his own existence, saved your only child from the most horrible of deaths, could you sacrifice his life thus remorselessly?"

"Aye, though the service had been rendered through each day my only child can number. As for his service we paid that with gold; the best of payments, for it washes clear all claims of gratitude and all obligation too."

"In gold, aye, true, it was in gold, but does your conscience never ask you, in whose gold the payment was so made?"

"When I keep a bugbear with so fine a name, be sure I will question it most narrowly. —Waste no further time, call in the boy,—ask that brief question, if he answer it, as I suspect;

and as his every lineament proves, he must die.—There," pointing down to the dark blue sea,—"there is the only home for you or him, and you may choose between you."

"Impossible!—I cannot add another victim to the frightful past.—If you could but bear my burdens for one hour, you would not point out these dreadful deeds for further misery."

"Nay, if it be as bad as you represent it, such a mere trifle more can never make it worse."

"It is in vain to tempt me, no inducement on earth, nor hell, should lead me to the commission of this further guilt; I am steeped too deeply in that horrible tide already.—Could all the honours, and the wealth within the globe be mine, gladly would I give them all to wash out the past, even though it left me nothing but beggary, so I could only labour for my bread in peacefulness of mind! Besides, what madness you propose, how could we ever commit any violence against this youth, protected as he is by a thousand eyes."

"Psha, do you think I ask you to put a razor to his throat, or drug his cup, or go through any of those vulgar exhibitions, which ask for a jury's interference? You know this boy's intense ambition, you know his sentiments on being flogged,—watch but some opportunity,—you have done it for far less a stake, and none can do it better,—set some trap within his path, disrate and flog him, and if I know any thing of the lad, he will save you all further trouble as to his life, by taking it himself?"

An involuntary shudder, at this most odious proposition, crept over the face of Sir Henry. "No, it is in vain to try to argue me into it; if he had been a stranger, this thing might have been practicable, this might,——but remembering all that has passed, and who he is, rather than load my mind with further horrors, I would prefer to abandon all."

"And so let all the sufferings of the past, the guilt of which you speak so touchingly, pass for a bubble! A mere nothing! A matter that has brought you misery and torment, and

whose real advantages you let slip, even in the first moment of possession."

"Such is the penalty of deeds like mine, and their deepest curse lies in the fact that we never find this out until too late."

"Trembling prater, say rather, that the chief curse of deeds, like ours, is the necessity of sharing them with undecided spirits like your own! Give up all! Tell me, then, are you to have no compassion for my child, born to expect wealth and title? His disappointment it seems is to be nothing in the balance!"

"Better to leave him, at any rate, without the curse of blood upon his arms, than all the estates that violence can bring. Urge no further, therefore, I have had more than enough of it; another step of this description, nothing shall induce me to take."

For some seconds, Lady Coxcomb, on hearing this reply, walked up and down the room, muttering, half aloud, half to herself, the most frightful imprecations on her remorseful lord; at last, when the torrent of her fury began to abate, she seemed to awake to the fact, that as

little or nothing was to be achieved, with her obstinate fellow conspirator, by violent means, it would be worth another trial by a more gentle course.

"Well, at any rate," said she, pausing in her troubled walk, "if you will not consent to any thing that may be interpreted into violence, at least you can have no objection to this, for the security of our boy. This lad--this Charles, is you know intensely ambitious; his whole soul is bent on succeeding in the profession he has undertaken.—His personal courage is unbounded.—At least there can be no harm when the opportunity offers in cutting out, or any similar expedition, to give him a command, and if he falls"—here the temptress paused, and fixed her eye upon Sir Henry, while the latter, catching readily at the idea, replied as he sighed deeply:

"Aye, that, indeed, would be the work of Heaven."

A smile of derision and contempt, might have been seen upon the features of Lady Coxcomb, as well indeed it might, at this

impious atrocity in endeavouring to shift off upon Providence the issue of a deed, which he had all the guilt to plan, without the daring to effect—"Yes," Sir Henry continued, "that may be, I shall offer no impediment to that; but do not urge me to take any step that may increase the frightful load, under which my life has already become a burden."

"Nay, you might ever have been sure, I should have been the last to inflict one unnecessary pang upon you; this is all I seek,—leave the rest to me, you are excited now; go and busy yourself in the duties of the ship, I will examine this boy as to whether he is really the person you suspect, and we can then consult upon the rest hereafter,"—laying her hand upon the shoulder of Sir Henry, the soft-hearted creature made one slight effort to blend the tender caresses of the woman, with the heart of the tigress, but it was an effort which had no very sensible or gratifying effect; since instead of appearing to produce any pleasurable emotion in the mind of Sir Henry,

a deep and undisguised shudder was the only discernible result, and making a motion of the head that might be taken in any way that pleased the acceptor, Sir Henry departed to the deck, leaving his titled piece of amiability below.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In a few minutes after the conference we have recorded, Charles received a summons to the cabin. Well might he wonder, on entering, why his presence was required by Lady Coxcomb; she received him very graciously, managed her questions with considerable art, though this it is hardly necessary to state; told him that she had received a letter from Sir George Auberville, commending him to her care, expressed a great admiration of the Baronet's character, and the delight it would afford her to attend to his recommendation; and finally, before Charles had at all prepared himself what course to take in reply, she put the sudden and fatal question, as to his occupation. Though he had long since resolved to deny

this most obstinately, yet the craft which Lady Coxcomb had employed, deprived him even of this slight protection, if it might so be called. Instead of making the enquiry in the usual manner, she rose to offer him a glass of wine, and as she was commending the poisoned chalice to his lips, she fixed on him that searching glance of hers, so as to watch every feature of his countenance during the inquisition, and said, "Oh! by the way, Sir George Auberville informs me you were apprenticed to a shoemaker in his village, is that so?" At this odious question the wine was checked in mid-career, while our hero's hand trembled till the sparkling fluid danced in the glass. Charles felt his cheeks tingling with an unusual suffusion, and while his eyes quailed beneath those of his interrogatress, he argued rapidly within himself, if I deny this matter, I shall contradict my benefactor, Sir George, fix on myself the stain of falsehood, without in any degree removing the stigma of that hateful trade, or benefitting my own case on board. Greatly annoyed as he was, these feelings induced him

to falter out a hesitating "Yes, madam, but I hope—"

Here her Ladyship interrupted the poor lad's hopes, with her usual hypocrisy.

"My dear Mr. James, pray don't imagine that any apology is necessary, I rather consider the fact as the greatest argument in your favour, that you should have risen to your present condition by your own merit; and unpossessed either in person, manners, or education of the slightest tincture of a low estate, by which you could be traced back to that industrious position."

"I am very glad, Lady Coxcomb," replied Charles, "that I receive your approbation, and that my humble origin has no argument against me in your eyes; only there are so many envious people in the world, that for many reasons I wish to keep this fact unknown."

"Quite right, Mr. James, quite right, and so, as far as I am concerned, believe me, that it shall ever remain; there is only one piece of advice I wish to give you."

"May I venture to ask, madam, what that is?"

"Oh certainly,—I consider it my duty to offer you every assistance in my power, as a small part of that deep debt of gratitude I owe you for my son's life. As far as my husband's interest can go, you may count entirely upon it, but my advice to you is, to lose no opportunity of serving yourself. By this I mean that wherever the least chance of distinction shall arise, you ought to seize it eagerly and without the least hesitation."

Here Charles bowed his head in mute respect, thereby intimating that such had long since been his determination. "Ours," continued the insinuating temptress at his elbow, "must always be a dangerous profession, but if I have read your character rightly, danger has nothing but charms in your eyes."

"In the profession of arms," gently faltered Charles, "danger must ever be but another word for glory."

"I was sure you would think so," pursued Lady Coxcomb, "and therefore, I am certain you will perceive, that to grapple with it like a hero at every turn, is your safest course."

"I have sworn to do so, Lady Coxcomb," eagerly replied our hero, his eyes sparkling with animation, as he uttered the words.

"Of course," said the other, "and it is not to be doubted that you will, and therefore, whenever an expedition for cutting out, or any other matter of life and death is likely to be at hand, whether you should remain in this ship, or move into any other, always take care that no name is placed in the volunteer's list so rapidly and so surely as your own; you know my husband's undoubted gallantry, and if he should live and you remain with him, such conduct will be at once the best reward you can offer him for what he has already done for you in times past, and the surest inducement of binding him to promote you for the future; and to say nothing else, it will always prove his best excuse for putting into your hands any little command that ought, in perfect strictness, to go to your senior officers."

"Believe me, Madam," said Charles, in conclusion, "I shall for ever feel myself most deeply grateful to you for this hint, of which

you shall soon see I will not fail to take the earliest and best advantage."

"Do so, honour and fortune will be sure to await on you, and no one will be more happy to see you heading some gallant enterprise than myself." With this Lady Coxcomb bestowed one of her most bewitching looks on the poor lad, whom she was thus endeavouring to betray to death! While he, knowing how rare all kind looks were from such a source, considered himself one of the most fortunate of mortals in gaining such approbation, and left the presence of this second Jezebel, more determined than ever to lose no opportunity of seeking the "bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth."

CHAPTER XXV.

At the time which our narrative has now reached, the 'Tartar' had sailed from Cork on her way to the West Indies, some days since, with the whole of the enormous convoy under the charge of herself and consorts; but getting becalmed in a few days, she was overtaken by the West India Packet, which bore to Sir Henry the letter of Sir George, and to our hero, a long and most affectionate account of the sayings and doings of the family at Cliffville, together with the intelligence of their intended departure for London.

Although Charles, of course, knew nothing of the specific dangers of the Metropolis, more especially as they concerned the peace of those moving in so elevated a position as Lady Siberia, still it was equally impossible that he should hear of such a step, without sighing

deeply over the hazards which his own hopes would undergo; when beauty so resistless as that which "made the starlight of his boyhood," beamed forth unclouded to attract every unhallowed gaze.

Moreover, with the natural sensitiveness of a mind at once quick and able, he reflected on the numbers of admirers who would immediately surround her; each and all of them possessing claims to consideration and admiration as much in their favour, as all that related to him was the reverse.

Then also occurred to him all the perils which, even to his uninitiated mind appeared inevitably to environ one who was known to possess wealth so large as Lady Siberia's. By degrees, as he walked the quarter deck during his first watch from eight to midnight, he followed the invariable practice of all lovers, by giving up every thought to his mistress. He could not help painting to himself the various designing fops and knaves, who would be likely to lay traps for the idol whom he worshipped as something too pure for ought but the prayers of humanity.

Though deficient in the actual experience of life, no one could endeavour more sedulously to make up for the want of this by that next best substitute for it, namely those books of daily knowledge which supply us with the records of circles on which our own course may never have impinged. Every novel, book of travels, poem, play, or indeed any other kind of literature, which was to be found within the ship, Charles seized with avidity and devoured with delight; soon that next passion which invariably follows the love of reading books, namely, the wish to write them, grew in his mind. Poetry, naturally, was the first subject on which he tried his cradled genius, as being of a more compact form than any prose effort. Already love sonnets, songs, and odes, beyond all number, had teemed forth from his prolific muse; all tending to one object, the glorifying his Lady Love. Possessed of a very musical ear and an exuberant imagination, some of his productions might not have shamed a loftier source. His models were the highest the art affords; and among the rest Pope was a most

favourite master. Beneath the soft influence of the moon, and while pacing up and down the deck, where so many a mistress has reigned supreme in the thoughts and hearts of the most gallant devotees, Charles, dwelling on the varied dangers to which he considered his divinity would be exposed in the great world, composed on the subject, a copy of verses which we will introduce to the reader in their proper place; and which, when we contrast them with the actual position in which we know Lady Siberia to have been placed by her visit to London, presents to us one of those coincidences which at first appear so startling, but which on reflection we find to be the natural result of thought and just perception.

In exactly the same proportion as Lady Siberia had striven to banish from her mind all remembrance of Charles, so the latter had unceasingly fostered in his own heart every image of, and feeling for, Lady Siberia.

With all the sanctity of the most zealous devotee, he had treasured up every relic that was hallowed from the most remote connection

with her memory? The piece of gold which she had presented to him, on the evening on which he first stood within the gardens of Cliffville, had never since been taken from around his neck. The sands on which she had left the tiny impress of her foot, were still in his possession; not only treasured up with the utmost care, but often referred to, and ever with renewed delight, as the best means of renewing in imagination those delicious moments which had otherwise flown for ever. Over these it was his especial delight to pour forth all his vows of distinction and courage; taking these relics with him into the solitude of the fore-top, or the studding-sail netting, it was here his custom, when relieved from his watch, to lie for hours with these and other little mementos of Siberia, sent him from time to time in his sister's letters—pressed to his lips, while a thousand fairy castles were from the fertile sources of his brain reared and destroyed, and rebuilt again.

Nor was his occupation always of so useless a character; at these times he was also ac-

customed to think long and deeply upon his profession; and to study not only all the books that he could procure relating to it, but to con over those more abundant, but oral lessons in seamanship, so useful in his calling.

It often recurred to him, as a matter of regret, that he had never taken his sister into his confidence with respect to his attachment, since on her punctuality in writing, he could always depend; and it would have been so delightful to have thus received perpetually recurring little histories of all that related to one so dear. In this matter, however, he was perhaps less a loser than he might at first suppose. Utterly unable himself to restrain his pen from dwelling on the name of the beloved fair one,—Anna, coupling this fact with other circumstances that came to her knowledge, soon guessed the real position of affairs.

Although in her own mind sadly convinced that such an attachment could never have a happy issue, she still entertained every anxiety that it should be cultivated by her brother. This passion it was, she perceived that had

lifted him above the low pursuits to which he seemed bound for life; and as long, therefore, as the slightest hope remained, by Lady Siberia not marrying any one else, she beheld in this direction of her brother's affection, the very best guarantee for his continuing to advance in life.

With this view she lost no opportunity of giving him the fullest intelligence of every matter she thought would prove agreeable. Many a little present given by Siberia to herself, found its way out to Charles, and among the rest a lock of that luxuriant hair which had always appeared to our hero to be about one of the most beautiful things in the creation; and to gain which he would have risked his life fifty times over.

The transport of our hero on receiving this trophy, was great beyond expression. It was immediately secured and placed beside the other amulet next his heart. And on these two charms of his life, he used to fold his hands in sleep at night, and whisper his orisons in the morning.

Could Lady Siberia have known with what perfect adoration she was worshipped, could she really have fathomed the manly excellence of that bosom in which her image was enshrined with such chivalrous idolatry, would she have striven so hard to have forgotten her humble devotee, and have rushed into the vortex of a heartless metropolis, to fly from truth like this? and for what purpose? For the sake of the hollow hypocrisy and those empty-headed flatterers, to whom fortune had awarded the more gaudy gifts of external rank and present fortune, instead of those noble capacities which formed the heroism of the orphan's character!

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FEW nights after the Tartar had fallen in with the homeward bound frigate, which, among other letters, bore away to England the little poem we have mentioned, Charles was once more walking the quarter-deck, keeping one of what are called the dog watches, namely, from six to eight o'clock at night.

The position of the Tartar, relative to the convoy, was that of the most windward ship; another man-of-war sailed ahead, a third had the command to leeward; the Admiral with his flag kept a position in the middle, while a fourth ship at some distance off brought up the rear. Within these limits sailed the convoy, crowded together like so many chickens in a coop, and many of them falling a great way behind in their career, from the heavy nature of their

lading, and the fact of speed being the last object contemplated in their construction.

The generality of Captains, when their convoys won't keep up with them, fire two or three angry shots either over or into the offender, as the case may be; and then, if this has neither killed nor quickened any of the crew, they then make sail and leave them to their fate.

Admiral Roupell, however, was a very different person; he took unusual pains in disposing the squadron as we have mentioned, and had given strict orders that the 74 bringing up the rear, should render every possible assistance to the convoy; not only by pausing, but by sending on board the merchant ships hands to help them when necessary in setting more sail, or effecting any other duty that might arise.

The Captains were not particularly well pleased in being obliged to pay all this attention to a matter they were generally accustomed to treat so lightly, but the Admiral was a man accustomed to discharge his duty efficiently, and to take care that his subordinates did the

same. Viewing the commerce of the country, as one of the greatest charges that could be committed to the zeal of a Naval Officer, he insisted upon its most rigid protection.

The merchant vessels of course sailed very slowly, and the impatient men-of-war were not only compelled to loiter at the same jog trot, but obliged to be constantly backing, filling, &c. in order to keep their stations. In the night time this was especially difficult, and every now and then, some lumping trader, with all hands fast asleep, would fall on board the bows of one of the line-of-battle ships, get half her spars and rigging carried away, and the hull nearly knocked under water. Trifles of this description often repeated, rendered the subordinate Captains extremely angry and impatient, while the vessel appointed to lead the van, used invariably to crowd all sail, as soon as ever daylight was gone, walk ahead of the convoy some thirty miles, and there reducing her canvass, wait till the brood of ducks, as they were called, came up again. This trick had been played on the night in

question. The weather had been squally all day, and sail by sail, the various ships had shortened their canvass, until the whole convoy were proceeding under double-reefed courses and top sails.

At about half past eleven, the moon would rise, but the heavens were so completely clouded, that very little light could be expected unless the weather cleared. It still wanted nearly a quarter to eight, when Charles, who was standing on the weather gangway, oppressed as he had been throughout the day by a vague feeling that some unusual occurrence was impending over him, and who had, therefore, to use the common sea phrase, been doubly on the look out for squalls, now seeing that the weather was rather suspicious, kept his eye very wisely and very vigilantly on the barometer that hung in a glass case before the Captain's cabin, under the little sort of half-deck that impended over it from the poop. Here of course the instrument was open to the observation of all the officers of the watch, and with very great apprehension of what was coming, Charles had

observed it sink rapidly eight degrees within the hour; conceiving it his duty to mention this to the officer of the watch, he did so; but, as it proved, this would perhaps have been much better let alone, for the Lieutenant in question was one of those hard drinking bigoted persons, on whom the lights of science beam in vain, unless they glimmer through a grog-bottle or a red nose; moreover, though rather an old man, he was but a young Lieutenant, the chief part of his life having passed in that, then somewhat questionable university, the midshipman's mess.

"What stuff o' nonsense is this you are running your head against, youngster; talk of the weather being influenced by a trumpery tube full of quicksilver,—all my grandmother, Sir. We used to do without such things, when I entered the service; I never heard of old Benbow pinning his faith upon a hollow bit of polished mahogany; and as for the glass going down—mind your watch, boy, and keep your log, that is quite enough for you."

Charles, mortified and abashed, touched his

hat in silence, and withdrew,—feeling all that annoyance that so many able officers have undergone to the neglect of their own energies, and the detriment of the service, when finding themselves under the command of people too inferior to comprehend their suggestions. The Lieutenant in question, had only joined the Tartar in Cork, in the room of a man whom Sir Henry had sent to the right about. He came on board most infinitely against his will; for the devil himself did not possess one half the powers upon his apprehension that Sir Henry Coxcomb had at his command. The very look of his dreaded Captain, seemed to travel like the touch of an electric eel through every sinuosity of his marrow.

From having been long neglected by the service, he had in his turn begun to neglect the service himself;—his duties for some years past had been confined to those of mate of the lower deck; his seamanship had entirely faded from his remembrance, he knew himself to be all but incompetent to keep watch in his own person, and thus for a youngster to presume to

tell him that unexpectedly bad weather was coming, was tantamount to saying that the trial of his commission was at hand. He knew very well that Sir Henry Coxcomb, on the display of any clear inability in his inferiors, thought nothing of ordering an inefficient officer into arrest, and breaking him by a court-martial at the next port.

Properly speaking, this ought only to have made him trebly vigilant to ward off any danger; instead of which, he bigotedly closed his eyes to the peril, as determinedly as if this alone was sufficient for his safety.

Charles, however, knew his man, and knew also that Sir Henry, whose ability as an officer no one doubted, placed the greatest faith in the indications of his barometer; determined, therefore, that the safety of the ship should not be compromised, he watched the opportunity when the steward was coming out of the cabin, and desired him, when next sent for, to contrive by some means or another to drop a hint, that he, the steward, thought the glass was falling very considerably, and that he had

heard the officer of the watch, talking to our hero about it.

The steward promised to carry Charles's hint into effect, but at the same time warned him that he did not dare to go into the cabin unless rung for; the steward, however, obligingly added, that as the lady's maid had the *entré* at pleasure, he, the steward, would mention it to the lady's maid, and she would perhaps be pleased to drop the important hint.

This the steward accordingly did; but the lady's maid, with one of those peculiar tosses of the head, to which lady's maids have ever been most partial, "begg'd to assure Mr. Steward that she was not going to get up from her tea, for any such nonsense. Mr. James was always full of his items, and presumed a great deal too much, on being, as he thought, a cabin favourite; but, if he knew all, he would not think himself quite such a favourite as he did; she knew something that would very soon put his pipe out, if that was all."

The steward was a good-natured man, and being of the Lieutenant's opinion that there

was no great matter in the barometer's going up or down, replied—

"Those midshipmen are always playing their pranks with every thing. I should not wonder if some of the youngsters of his watch, have'nt been making the glass go down just to bother Mr. James."

"No doubt of it," said the lady's maid, "besides, Mr. James is *such* a spoon;—no wonder."

Here the steward begg'd to offer his opinion, that Mr. James was not a spoon; when the lady's maid poured forth a volume of evidence on this point, which it is quite unnecessary to take upon our notes, especially as we possess the real key to her cool opinion of our hero.

Like the generality of other people on board, on first beholding Charles, she considered him a remarkably handsome young man, though she regretted very deeply that he was one of those persons, whom lands-people so uninentionally designate by the offensive title of common seamen,' instead of 'foremast men.'

Moreover, the lady's maid had first seen him in a moment of danger, and, therefore, one of pity; to wit, when she was peeping at him as he stood bared for punishment upon the quarter-deck. The moment he was raised to the quarter-deck, she had certain views of her own, relative to his further advancement. All the midshipmen were her lovers, as a matter of course, and Charles, who she was sure would instantly hasten to enlist in her corps, she had already destined to be the Captain of the band. Infinitely to her surprise and indignation, however, Charles, to use the expressions of the gunner, who had made fifteen offers of his hand to this very lady,—Charles was "very backward in coming forward, and stayed behind as he did before." This was an unpardonable offence in the lady's maid's eyes—To think that while thirty other young gentlemen were all ready to fight or die, or both, for a smile, Charles, the secret chosen one, should never even have petitioned for a kiss! the real fact being that our hero would have considered it something worse than apostacy, to have

allowed even a stray thought to wander towards any woman in the world but Siberia; and the fact of the lady's maid being rather good looking, increased the severity of Charles' morals in this respect, rather than otherwise, as a point of honour.

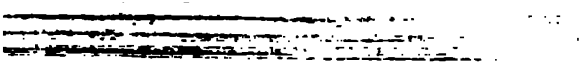
The neglected fair one, however, knowing nothing of his pre-engagements, beheld in his conduct the most unqualified contempt of court, and resented it accordingly. Alas! how small and insignificant are we compelled to appear in our own eyes, when on trifles so humble as these the lives of hundreds frequently depend!

END OF VOL. II.

G. NORMAN, PRINTER, MAIDEN LANE, COVENT GARDEN.

THE

ıPTAIN'S WIFE.



THE

CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF CAVENDISH.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN, NAVAL SURGEON, PORT ADMIRAL,
ETC. ETC. ETC.

" Lovelie, yet counting not her charmes,
Wise, yet pretending not to knowe,
Gentle in peace, unbending 'midst alarms,
Warm within Vertue, and beyond it snowe,
To her who brings this treasure to my arms
I for such sumless gifte more worlds of Love will owe,
Than Jove could rule or Titans overthrowe.
Passions are likened best to floods and streames,
The shallow murmur, but the deepe are dumb,
So when affections yield discourse it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come ;
Then wrong not, dearest to my heart, my love for secret passion,
He smarteth most that hides his smart and sues for no compassion."
SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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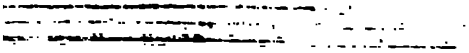

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Baffled in his design of conveying to the Captain any warning of the danger that Charles believed to be so imminent, all that he could now do, was to redouble his own vigilance, with a view of detecting in the external signs of the atmosphere the approaching signal of that danger, against which the Lieutenant of the watch would not allow himself to be forewarned in any less substantial manner.

As we have already said, the hour was about half-past seven: the bell had scarcely sounded,

when Charles perceived a white patch upon the waters, which came travelling down towards the Tartar with fearful rapidity; this was evidently a gale, lashing into foam the surface of the waves as it swept along.

"Here it comes at last, Sir," said Charles, running to the Lieutenant, and pointing to the spot.

"Here what comes? you young fool!" demanded his senior, who, from excessive use of ardent spirits, was as nervous as a fine lady, and who, moreover, happened to be then gently dozing, as he walked along.

"What's coming, Sir?" answered Charles, "why the squall, Sir; don't you see it to windward there." The Lieutenant looked up, and exclaimed with an oath,—"By the powers here it does come?—Knock my blessed eye out, youngster."

"What, Sir?"

"Knock my eye out, you young villain; and look sharp about it,"—then seeing that Charles stood all amazement; he continued with more swearing than was at all agreeable—

"You stupid spalpeen of the devil; don't

you know your own language yet? don't you hear me ask you for a glass of grog; cut down to the wardroom with you directly, and ask the steward for it; let it be as stiff as Pluto's pigtail,"—adding to himself, in a half growling kind of voice, "if I make any mistake in shortening sail, there is my commission gone! cut down, youngster, cut down with you, and get the grog. Oh! mother of me! that this squall could not have waited one little twenty minutes, and our watch was relieved!"

"Very well, Sir," replied Charles; "I had better send one of the youngsters to the ward-room steward, had not I, and not leave the deck myself, Sir?"

"By my soul, that is like the pride of a youngster, who was but a ship's boy himself a day or two back; do as I order you, Sir, or go to the mast-head directly."

Seeing there was no alternative, Charles flew below, in hopes to return before the crisis of their fate arrived; while, however, the ward-room steward was still pouring out the spirits, the seventy-four gave a sudden heel to star-

board, and a shock was felt as if every thing in the ship was about to be reduced to powder. Away rolled Charles, steward, the grog bottle, glasses, tumblers, desks, every moveable chattel in the neighbourhood surged to leeward in the utmost confusion. Men, boys, officers, dogs, and marines, together with sundry inanimate articles soon found themselves rolling a prostrate mass in the lee scuppers.

The supper things had just been laid out in the ward-room, and all the tumblers, plates, and other articles of furniture sliding off the table, came to the ground with a most terrific din, while nearly at the same moment the coffee cups in the Captain's cabin, being similarly acted upon, re-echoed the route in that more select region. Charles, scrambling to his feet as rapidly as possible, while the ship righted slightly, made the best of his way to the quarter-deck.

This was a difficult matter, all the officers were crowding up the after hatchway; but at length, without having many more than half a dozen feet thrust down his throat, a few black-eyes,

and a mouthful of loosened teeth, he found himself staggering upon the quarter-deck. Here mechanically he looked round for the officer of the watch, to deliver to whom, in strict obedience to his orders, he still held in his hand the tumbler containing some portion of the spirit which he had obtained from the steward: as, however, the Captain had clearly taken command, and the boatswain was even then endeavouring to call all hands, Charles concluded that he had better throw the whole affair overboard, and attend to his duty; in an instant away went the tumbler and spirits, and looking to see how he could be most useful, the sight that struck upon his eye, made almost his daring spirit to quail within him.

To windward the sea was one expanse of universal white, the heavy clouds that obscured the moon, though they prevented the waves from sparkling in their mad career, could not keep down the general glare produced by the agitated surface of the water. The wind seemed howling over it with a degree of fury, which till then, Charles never could have

believed it capable of possessing. It was utterly impossible to distinguish where the waves ended or the sky began, volumes on volumes of spray, with large heavy masses of dark blue seas, were hurled over the endangered ship, with inconceivable violence, until every one on deck was as thoroughly wet to the skin, as if subject to the action of a force pump, while the howling of the tempest through the shrouds drowned the otherwise terrific chorus of screams, oaths, and orders.

Among other instructions given by the Admiral to the Tartar, as the weathermost ship of the convoy, was the peremptory one of unfailingly firing two guns in quick succession, whenever she might happen to observe or be caught in any sudden squall of wind. Charles, with his usual foresight, had foreseen the necessity of discharging this duty very suddenly, and had given orders to the gunners to be ready accordingly.

Some nicety was required in taking care that the guns should go off precisely one after the other, as the very opposite signal, that of "make more sail," was conveyed, by firing only

one gun—an order so much more frequent in convoys, that it is generally used six or seven times a day, and this we say consisted of a single gun. The moment that Charles reached the deck, and beheld in this frightful scene, the perfect accuracy of his own prognostications, he rushed towards the forecastle, and gave the orders to the gunners to fire the squall signal.

"Aye, aye," replied Jones, the one-legged gunner's mate, who had the linstock all ready, and removing the cap from one of the guns, and applying it to the touchhole, forth flashed the ominous intelligence, as they intended it to be, of the approaching danger, along the gale; the first gun discharged, the gunner rapidly applied his linstock to the second touchhole, but the powder had got so wet, that no effort could get it to explode; "try another gun," loudly bellowed Charles in his ear, and quickly removing the second cap: but this was equally faulty with the first; another, and another, were tried in quick succession, but in vain; and thus in the midst of all the terrific fury of that tremendous squall, was heard the mockery of

the Admiral's repeating ship, ordering the convoy to make more sail! At any other moment the health of the gunners, would have suffered considerably from this piece of mismanagement at the hands of Sir Henry; but at present he was too much occupied by the imminent danger of his ship, to have much regard for trivial points of discipline. The unfortunate Lieutenant of the watch, as soon as he perceived that a squall really was approaching, instead of making it his first care to shorten sail, and that done, then, if necessary, to carry his report to the Captain, decided unfortunately on taking the latter step first; thus the whole fury of the tornado caught the Tartar, while still spreading to the gale a considerable quantity of canvas.

Scarcely had the words left the lips of the Lieutenant, when the ship was on her beam ends.

"You drunken fool!" was the courteous reply of the Captain, "why have I not been told of this before? this is the consequence of not having the glass in your eye!"

The Lieutenant, who, it seems, heard him but imperfectly amid the row, and with his inveterate bigotry to times passed, never dreamt that Sir Henry was alluding to the barometer; made answer—"Upon my word, Sir Henry, I have not had a drop of any thing since I relieved watch; when I saw the wind coming, I did send down—"—Long before the Lieutenant could finish his wonderful narrative, of what he did, when he saw the wind, Sir Henry had rushed upon the quarter-deck, and given orders for shortening sail.

As far as the topsails went, this was superfluous; with a sound like a clap of thunder, the Baronet beheld the fore topsail start bodily from its bolt-ropes, and vanish like a flimsy pocket-handkerchief upon the whirlwind, into the mist to leeward, this example the storm-gib followed, but not until it had snapped the gib-boom short off, and that spar was floating under the Tartar's bows, with the butt end beating against the timbers as if it intended to break through. The foresail was nearly at the same moment torn into shreds, and remained

streaming in the wind; like so many penons flaunting in the gale from the fore yard-arm; in this condition also was the mizen-topsail, while, unfortunately enough, as always happens in these dilemmas, the two largest sails in the ship, the main topsail, and the main course remained uninjured. Sir Henry's quick eye caught the whole danger that threatened the ship, in a moment.

"Let fly the main topsail halyards! Hands by the main sheets, and main clew garnets." What was to have followed these orders was perfectly guessed, but was never heard, so terrifically violent came the storm, that the men stationed to ease off both the sheet and the tack of the main course, from stupidity or fear, were unable, or neglected to use sufficient caution. The ropes ran through their hands with the swiftness of a serpent; the main-sail, as a natural consequence, got loose, and flapping in the wind, not only threatened death to all around, wherever the huge blocks at its corners should happen to strike; but the clew garnets, which were the only means of hauling the

sail up, being reeved through double blocks, became entangled, and thus every effort, either to haul it on board, or to clew it up to the yard, becoming utterly abortive, the whole fury of the squall made a plaything of the huge sheet of canvas, and while it flapped in the wind with the noise of thunder, it threatened at every plunge to tear the mast out of the ship, as well as to bury the hull itself in the vexed tumult of the surrounding waters. As for Sir Henry, he rushed about the deck with all the rage and fury of a roaring lion: after all the pains and severity with which he had forced discipline on board the Tartar, the very idea of his being caught unprepared and unexpectant by a sudden squall, was alone sufficient to have put him past all patience; while the fact of his losing a spar for want of the exercise of proper seamanship, by any of his officers or crew—men whom he had harassed to death with endless and needless exercise, was enough to drive him stark raving mad.

"Mr. Ferrit," cried he, screaming so shrilly as to be heard above the gale, "will you

make those infernal thieves of men, either clew the main tack up to the yard, or else run it on board again."

"Ay, ay, Sir!" cried Mr. Ferrit, who well knew the danger of any more detailed reply.

"Don't answer me, ay, ay, Sir!" replied Sir Henry, stamping on the gun on which he stood in pure rage and fury, "don't answer me, ay, ay, Sir! but do it; don't you see, Sir, at every plunge, the sail makes the strain come so heavily upon the mainmast-head and the main shrouds, that it is drawing one bolt after another."

"I can't help it," angrily replied the first Lieutenant; for the first time in his life making anything that could be called a reply to Sir Henry. "The clew garnets are so,"—but here all explanation with respect to the clew garnets, was interrupted by the Captain jumping down upon the deck with his spy-glass in his hand, in such a transport of rage, that every one expected to see him strike his first Lieutenant upon the spot.

Although he did not fulfil this expectation,

his descent was so regardless of all care, that two or three men were struck down beneath his feet, and while gnashing his teeth at his junior officer, he exclaimed. "Don't answer me in that way, Sir; you shall help it!—don't you see the whole safety of the ship is jeopardied by the infernal, atrocious, cursed, lubberly manner in which your men have mismanaged that sail? don't you see, Sir, that the flapping of the main course, has drawn bolt after bolt from the main channels, till the whole of the main-mast, sail, and all, is resting on four of the shrouds only."

At this moment the sail gave one tremendous surge, more powerful, if possible, than all that preceded it, and scarcely had its roar been echoed from stem to stern of the seventy-four, when, with a terrific twang, like some huge harp-string breaking, away went another bolt, leaving only three behind it sound, and not only was the broken bolt drawn from its hold, but evidently, by the sound, whirled over the heads of the ship's company, as it sang through the troubled air with a melancholy moan, and then fell into the sea to leeward.

"Do you hear, Sir; do you hear?" cried the maddened Captain, once more addressing the unfortunate Ferrit, who could not make his superior comprehend what was the true difficulty of the case, "will you make your men get the sail up or down, or will you wait till the mainmast goes and splits the decks up in its fall, with all this press of canvas upon it?"

"Sir, the clew garnets are foul!" roared Ferrit in reply, straining his deep bass voice, till he was not only hoarse, but almost dumb, from his efforts to make the Captain hear. Wholly unversed in that principle of acoustics which rendered all he said perfectly inaudible from being uttered in the same key with the tempest, Ferrit's shouting only made a concord with it, instead of a distinct sound. At this moment came another terrific flap of the sail—*twang* went another bolt head, snapping from its inside riveting and whizzing either wholly or in part into the air; Sir Henry could stand this no longer, falling with full drawn spy-glass upon the unfortunate men around him, he screamed as he did so;—"Haul on board the

main tack, will you?—You eternal scoundrels! will you haul?—Haul,—haul!"—The men, stimulated by his cries and blows, applied the full power of their herculean strength to the rope in question, and after one or two violent plunges and almost superhuman efforts to drag the main sail down to its place, the tack itself broke, and away flew the sail more unrestrained than ever.

CHAPTER II.

When Sir Henry beheld this result, he, in the paroxysm of his fury, snatched his hat from his head, and stamped upon it with the gestures and the cries of a maniac, seemingly unable, like the distracted Moor, to give utterance to anything further than the words "Fools, fools, fools!" Seeing at last there was no prospect of getting the sail off her in any other manner, he looked aloft, as if to measure the practicability of the effort, and how far it would be possible to effect the only alternative which presented itself of sending a hand aloft. It was quite clear to any one who did go aloft, the chances were ninety to one of certain death. To say nothing more, the bare fact that the mainmast of the seventy-four was now supported by only two shrouds out of its original number,

was a circumstance fraught with danger in the highest degree even in ordinary weather, while now, with the tempest blowing as it did, the ship pitching and straining in the most merciless manner, and more than all, the invincible and obstinate mainsail flapping to and fro in the gale, until it shook even the very hull of the line-of-battle ship to its centre, all these made a sum of perils to which it was quite unnecessary to add the additional weight of another human being, to send whom aloft would make the enterprise one of perfect insanity.

"A hundred pounds to any man who will go up, and cut away that sail," screamed Sir Henry, pointing to the main-yard, and not choosing to order any on a duty, which he felt he should have been unwilling to undertake himself.

A dead silence, as far as any human interruption might go, was now heard upon the decks of the Tartar; nothing but the roaring of the wind through the rigging, the complaining of the spars and timbers, the dashing of the waves, and the flapping of the deadly sail,

responded to the perilous invitation. One slight youth there was, however, who seemed to have made up his mind to achieve this distinction or perish in the attempt; for, after quietly looking up at the yard for a few seconds, he as deliberately as if going to his dinner, walked into the Captain's cabin, put his hand into the knife tray, which hung in a certain spot, selected the carving knife from among the rest, and then coolly, but rapidly returned upon the quarter-deck.

By this time, however, a frightful change had taken place in the position of affairs for the worse. Scarcely had Sir Henry pronounced his offer, and the silence of the crew fore and aft allowed it to be heard, when at another bound of the sail, one of the two last remaining bolts gave way, and the stupendous weight of the main-mast now remained supported by a solitary shroud.

"A thousand guineas to any one who will go aloft and cut away that sail," cried Sir Henry, scarcely knowing what he uttered, while his vexation rose beyond endurance, at the pro-

spect of lying a dismasted hulk in such a gale, even if no worse befell the ship.

At this moment a female voice was heard to ask at Sir Henry's elbow: "Where is Mr. James, surely he will not hesitate to come forward?"

"Here I am, Lady Coxcomb," replied our hero, answering the appeal in person, and drawing from his bosom the large carving knife, to shew that he had got ready for the frightful adventure, before being thus personally called on to achieve it.

"God protect you, my dear boy!" said the titled hypocrite, quite content that her blessing was enough to bring ruin on any head.

"No fear of that, Madam," replied the chivalrous Charles, swiftly replacing the knife within his jacket, and as he thus thrust himself into the very jaws of death, taking away from over his heart, the lock of Lady Siberia's hair which he there wore, and secretly bestowing on it one impassioned kiss—the last it might be of the countless thousands already lavished on that which had once been, and indeed still was a portion of herself.

As Charles sprung up upon the weather bulwarks to execute his design he found the shrouds so completely entangled by the gale from only one being left standing, that ascent to windward was impossible. Quickly getting down again, with a view to going up the other side, the Captain, who witnessed this retreat, and at once set it down to his heart failing him, immediately stamping on the deck, pronounced the order, "Out with the axes, and cut away the mast."

"Stay, Sir," said Charles, "wait a few minutes with the axes; at any rate, I can get up to leeward, though I can't to windward."

"Impossible," was Sir Henry's answer, "don't you see the rigging to leeward is all slack and hanging out over the ship's side in a perfect bow, besides which, you will have your brains dashed out by the blocks at the end of the main-sheet."

"Faint heart, Sir, never won a fair lady," gallantly replied Charles, springing over to leeward, and at once dashing on to the lee hammock nettings. — "Come down, Sir, this

instant! come down! come down, Sir, I order you! this instant I order you, come down!" Again and again screamed Sir Henry, touched perhaps by the devoted gallantry of the boy, or it might well be, in that stern hour, when destruction was so near them all, moved by some feeling of remorse, not to anticipate a doom which a few minutes might bring upon himself.

"Fool, fool! let him go," whispered the fearless and unyielding voice of Lady Coxcomb at his elbow, holding by the arm Sir Henry, who actually seemed inclined to rush after and thus personally preserve our hero from the risk he ran; vain alike were the cries of the one, or the whispers of the other. Charles heard the recal, but love and ambition were both bounding in his heart, and he was determined that night to prove to all hands on board that no combination of death, nor any other perils could instil one moment's fear into his soul.

While this scene was acting, description can do but most inadequate justice to the breathless

attention which engrossed both officers and crew; with deep admiration, not wholly unmixed in some breasts perhaps with envy, they saw the young and beardless lad whose promotion to the quarter-deck was still so recent in all their memories, silently and rapidly commit himself to a task which none other of the many hundreds of bold spirits there assembled dared to attempt; from which moreover they were all morally convinced that he never possibly could return to the deck a living being.

If the slightest fibre of the sole remaining weather shroud should chance to give way, on that very instant would topple down mast, sail, yards and rigging, and amid that inextricable and confused mass would be hurled into the pitiless and raging sea, the lifeless body of the heroic adventurer.

None of these thoughts, however, disturbed the mind of him who was most open to their influence; mutely pressing between his lips the adored relic of her for whose love he had braved all this danger, he remembered that this was the only way in which he could prove

himself worthy of her regard, and rejoicing that the opportunity had arrived, he shut out from his mind every thing but the remembrance of her worth and beauty, and the consideration of what he now had to perform.

Clinging with the desperate tenacity of a cat to the slack and agitated ropes, and suspended over the sea, to this frightful and perilous situation was added the momentary danger of being dashed to pieces by the large blocks at the corner of the mainsail.

He had already gained half the distance to the main-yard, when Lady Coxcomb, who had watched his progress, if possible, with more intense anxiety than that displayed by any one else on board, and who seemed already, by the hateful expression of her countenance, to fear that his daring would be ultimately successful, here laid her fingers upon Sir Henry's shoulder, and with the deep hollow voice of excessive agitation, conveyed into his ear the words,—"The shroud,—the shroud."

Sir Henry was so engrossed with watching the progress of Charles, that when these sounds

were at first uttered, he started like one in a trance, seemingly unaware of their import, and turning round with an enquiring look, as if to demand what they really meant.

"The shroud! the shroud!" again whispered Lady Coxcomb, this time pointing with her finger to the solitary rope in question, that had so admirably borne the frightful strain upon it. Seeming, at last, to comprehend to what her ladyship alluded, Sir Henry made answer—

"Shroud! what of it? It is not going, is it?"

"No, but it soon would," was the low reply she muttered; and as she did so, Sir Henry felt something thrust into his hand: looking down so as to examine the gift, he beheld an open penknife. While he was yet gazing at this in wonderment and horror, the same low voice added—"The slightest touch will be enough."

As if riveted by some demoniac spell, Sir Henry, with his lips distended, and his eyes fixed in horror, stood looking at the murderous instrument in his hand.

"Quick, quick," continued the woman, "or it will be too late. See, he has nearly gained

the sail. Fool! fool!" clasping his arm, and endeavouring to lead him on towards the treacherous deed; "what do you fear? Another moment, and the opportunity is lost. Now, before they take notice of our whispering; but a mere scratch is necessary with such a strain upon the rope—do be firm—no one can see you! All eyes are turned on him. See, his foot is upon the yard. Indecisive trembler, look! He has cut away one corner of the sail. Hark! how the canvas tears along—half your chance is already lost—be quick—be firm—I say now, —*now*, before he can cross over to the other side!—If you would use the knife, with half his strength of purpose we should be secure.—Delay another moment, and all his lost. Why do you not act?—Now he runs across the yard—he stoops—he bends—I see his knife gleaming in the spray. See, there is yet another hope for you—one little touch—the slightest scratch —and he is gone. Now! now! under a pretence of giving him some directions, lay your hand lightly on the shroud, as if supporting

yourself by it: 'tis but a touch, and you can leave it to itself before it falls."

"Must I?" hoarsely gasped forth Sir Henry, still irresolute.

"You must, and shall, or we live in perpetual dread of retribution."

"I will then," faintly replied the goaded criminal, stepping on a gun that would in another instant have enabled him to lay his hand, as Lady Coxcomb had so treacherously advised, upon the all-important shroud, under a pretence of supporting himself. Already Sir Henry stood upon the iron instrument of death —already his hand was outstretched to do the deed of double murder, while the traitor's slight but fatal blade was concealed within it,— when he was startled almost to falling by a sudden shout—a cheer so long, and so powerful, that even amid all the horror of the gale, it bore down in silence every other tumult. Involuntarily Sir Henry looked aloft, and there he beheld, darting, like a small white rag, into the dark abyss to leeward, that well-tried main-

sail, whose stubborn excellence had so seriously threatened the safety of every soul on board. Charles had succeeded in cutting it from the yard;—the shout that had startled Sir Henry was the involuntary burst of admiration and delight from the assembled crew below, and there remained our hero himself upon the main-yard-arm; his figure as erect as if he stood upon the safest spot of land in all the Queen's domains, supporting himself with one hand upon the lift, and waving aloft with the other the knife that had just proved of such essential service. Equally conscious of the folly of unnecessarily exposing himself to danger, as he was resolute in despising it for a sufficient end, he now, with the swiftness for which his slight form was so admirably calculated, ran in along the yard. He quickly gained the mainmast, and there seizing the fore-top-sail braces that ran down by its side, they glided through his hands with matchless swiftness, and before Sir Henry could recover from the astonishment that had checked his

deadly purpose, Charles, the hero of the night, — the admiration of both officers and crew,—once more stood safe on the deck before him.

CHAPTER III.

Our hero had accomplished the perilous task, and still unharmed, regained the quarter-deck; but here a sad disappointment awaited him. It was natural, under the arduous circumstances of the case, that he should have expected from Sir Henry the warmest expressions of gratitude; when, therefore, he saw that officer standing aside, wearing on his brow a mixed expression of horror, surprise, and something more, which no ingenuity of his could translate, he feared that in some mode or another, though he knew not how, he had given offence, or fallen short of the duty he had undertaken. Could he but have guessed all that was passing in that most troubled bosom, which, we may inquire, would then have

exhibited the greatest symptoms of wonderment? As some compensation, however, for the disappointment of that moment, Charles certainly did hail, with no paltry feeling of gratification, the warm and hearty manner in which both first and second Lieutenants seized and shook his hands, while, discipline forgotten for the moment, even the rough seamen crowded round him, with expressions of the warmest admiration. Far, however, from acting the part of Sir Henry, was Lady Coxcomb.

Speaking once more in her husband's ear, "Fool and coward, if you could not finish a task too easy, you can at least pretend to welcome him." Then rushing forward herself, and caressing heartily the hand which the others relinquished to her grasp, she warmly exclaimed —"I feel that half this triumph is my own."

Gratefully did Charles return that pressure, and while with unspeakable delight he retained that soft hand in his own, how little did he dream with whose blood it had been stained already; nay more, with whose blood it was still thirsting to be dyed.

Last among the congratulators approached Sir Henry. The readiness of his wife's hypocrisy seemed to give him fresh hints, and courage for his own, and with the brief exclamation—"You have won your reward; never man more deserved it! Mr. Ferrit, wear ship; let us get her on the other tack, and as soon as we have saved our main-mast, send down top-gallant masts and yards."

On hearing these words, the group that had before surrounded our hero on the quarter-deck, scattered right and left to their respective stations. Sir Henry seized his speaking trumpet, and with that symbol of authority, seemed also in some degree to regain command of his own powers. Walking over to the gangway of the Tartar, with a shudder of equal abasement and disgust, he threw overboard the knife which had proved so useless in his hands; and then returning to where his wife was still standing, under the shadow of the weather bulwarks, addressed some observation to her. Answer, however, she seemed resolved to deign none, save by a look of contempt, so concen-

trated that she might have passed for the very impersonification of scorn. Having thus regarded Sir Henry for some minutes in the most withering silence, she turned, and with all the majesty of her tall commanding figure sweeping along the quarter-deck, was rapidly lost in the gloom of her own cabin.

CHAPTER IV.

For eight most long and heavy days had the Tartar been driving under close-reefed fore course, and storm-staysail before the fury of that terrific gale, which broke upon them in the manner we have attempted to describe in the preceding chapters; a gale which seems by turns to have visited with its death-dealing scourge, every known quarter of the habitable globe.

By this tempest alone, as it broke forth in its uncontrollable fury, in the different spots it visited, property to the amount of more than two millions sterling is estimated to have been sacrificed, and entirely lost for ever to mankind, either by sinking at sea, or being swallowed up in earthquakes on shore, while

a number something over rather than under one hundred thousand lives, is supposed to have been sacrificed at the same time, and by the same means. Even in the simple convoy alone, which had come out to sea with the Tartar, a most frightful contribution must have been made to this recorded havoc. On the morning succeeding the night we have attempted to describe, only thirty out of seventy-four merchant vessels were to be seen, and of the remainder, distinct intelligence never reached England of more than five, the history of the rest, the great deep alone can render. Of the men of war, one was missing, and afterwards gained a port in the West Indies, in so disabled a state that her crew were transferred to other vessels, and the hull condemned and broken up: of the other three not one had escaped without the loss of several spars, while the most severely handled was the ship of the Admiral.

As far as the eye could see, one dim expanse of dark and threatening aspect presented itself: not a glimpse of sky was anywhere to be

detected : a low flat canopy of inky clouds threw their leaden and threatening reflection upon the war of waves below. Here the sea was running under the influence of the tempest, to a height of which our hero had never before had the slightest conception. He had read in fictitious tales, of the sea running mountains high, but had always attributed this language to the pen of the romancist, instead of the model set by nature; now, however, he had an opportunity of judging for himself, when he beheld the vast hull and topmast of a seventy-four, at the short distance of only a few hundred yards astern, become completely lost in the vale of waters, between two crested summits that roared like cataracts as they culminated on either side, for a distance of twenty yards along the ridge of each. As for the merchant vessels, they dotted the troubled surface of the waters, like mere aquatic birds, such specks did they appear, not only as compared with the men of war, but more especially as seen floating on the mighty billows in question; the great majority of them were

unable to show a single rag to the gale, numbers had their colours flying, with the ensign downwards, as a signal of distress, and in the course of the first day, no less than seven of these unfortunate vessels were plainly seen from the decks of the Tartar, to founder with all hands on board. As to helping them, that was a matter entirely out of the question, no boat by any possibility could have lived three minutes in such a sea: and as to any communication between ship and ship, such a project would simply have increased the dangers that now threatened them on every hand. Thus, then, were the crews of the men of war obliged to look helplessly on, while their fellow creatures were drowning by fifties around them, thinking themselves only too happy that they did not share the same fate.

The first day slowly crept away, bringing no relief, but the hope of better weather; the second came, and the gale was fully as furious as it had been at its first burst. The third—the fourth—fifth—sixth—seventh dawned, and yet the wind appeared unabated in its fury.

As to the direction of the convoy, that was a matter of the most perfect providence, where they were placed or how they were going, became a question of the most entire guess work.

Of neither sun, moon, nor star, had any of the squadron caught one moment's observation from the first hour of the tornado. Choice of course there was none, one by one the merchant ships of the convoy had disappeared, sunk, or parted company in some manner that left the strongest fears for their safety. On the evening of the seventh day, only the Admiral and the Tartar remained in company, each of them so crippled, and sprung in their masts and yards, and so strained in their timbers that it was as much as the commanders could possibly effect to prevent their ships from broaching-to in the trough of the sea, as they scudded before the gale, and as to any attempt to bear up or heave to, that their crippled state would have converted into a perfect certainty of being instantly dismasted.

Under these melancholy circumstances, it

scarcely needed that their fears should have been further heightened by the dark and gloomy morning of the eighth day, being ushered in by a terrific storm of thunder and lightning. At this time, the Admiral's flag ship was on their larboard beam, scudding abreast of them, and every now and then when the fierce glare of the electric fluid seemed to light up the very deep with its awful illumination, the seamen could perceive their chieftain's blood red flag, still flaunting defiance from the cap of the fore topmast, which had been already struck to escape as much as possible the fury of the gale. At these times, they could also plainly discern the countenances of the pale and haggard crew, who, worn out with apprehension, and drenched perpetually by the ceaseless spray, crowded on the quarter-deck and forecastle of the ship, dreading lest some sudden sea might wash them from their questionable place of refuge, and scarcely knowing how soon the ship and all on board her might not be swamped, or pooped, by the frightful sea then running.

On board the Tartar the scene was equally distressing, and thus these two leviathans of the deep, remained running beside each other, as helpless in their mighty strength, as if they were but cockle shells on some resistless stream. The thunder storm had first burst about nine or ten miles to windward of them, dead astern, and by the increasing vividness of the flashes, and the time that passed while it was travelling down to their ears, the horrified crews of the two vessels were able to count, with each departing second, the progress which the lightning made in reaching their own immediate neighbourhood.

With a rapidity that can easily be imagined in such a storm, the dangerous clouds soon reached the spot where the line of battle ships were scudding, and as they approached, the seamen all observed with horror, the pale blue forked lightning darting down upon the sea in every direction, still nearer and nearer to themselves; at last, a peal of thunder seemed to burst immediately under their stern, so terrific

was the shock, and so stunning the sharp noise.

This was the crisis of their danger: if the deadly cloud passed on, the next emission of its consuming fluid would be ahead, to leeward of them, and without danger. While these matters, however, were still upon the lips of both crews, forth flashed the contents of the thunder cloud, once more seeming to envelope in its embrace, of splendid but dreadful flame, the ship of the Admiral, while so plainly did the light act upon its object, that every rope, spar and person on board, even to the most minute particular, were plainly observable from the decks of the Tartar. An universal exclamation of horror broke from all on board the latter man of war, but it was scarcely uttered, when its sound was swallowed up in the simultaneous roar of heaven's artillery, that accompanied the flash, while as this rolled away, and left the palpitating listeners at liberty to regard anything but their own safety, they vainly strove to pierce through the gloom of the night with longing eyes, in order to dis-

cover if the seventy-four so perilously distinguished was still floating on the surface of the water, or had sunk beneath the combined fury of the elements.

"By Jove! Mr. Ferrit, I think that has settled her," said Sir Henry, addressing his first Lieutenant, after he had witnessed the evident fact of his superior officer's ship being struck by the fatal fluid.

"I hope not, Sir," replied his subordinate officer, "though I fear there is no room to doubt, that flash struck her somewhere; a few minutes more, Sir Henry, and the cloud opens again; we shall very soon be able to judge whether we have any consort left, and if not —"

"Why, then we must be prepared to follow next ourselves."

"Those were the very words, Sir Henry, I had upon my lips; my only wonder is how we have ever been enabled to swim so long." A dead pause followed this last observation, and in mute expectation of their eyesight soon convincing them of the sad fate of the flag-ship

the whole crew of the Tartar remained looking on, but without uttering a single word. Five, ten, fifteen minutes elapsed, and no further flash of lightning appeared; it was as if the demon of the storm, satisfied with the dreadful vengeance inflicted, had closed his lips of fire to open them no more.

"The storm is over," said Sir Henry, "in all probability we shall know nothing of her fate till day-light breaks; then, if she is not to be seen, there can be little doubt she has gone down."

"Little room enough to doubt that, Sir, already," said the first Lieutenant; but before he had well closed his sentence, there burst forth over that vast dark and corpse-lined sea, a flash of light certainly, but not of the pale, sickly description that had before marked the glare of the lightning—it was a dull, red, heavy blaze, that shot across the black rolling waters, and then was followed by the deep rumbling of a gun.

"By heavens, she floats yet," exclaimed Ferrit, as this sight and sound met the senses.

"Aye, but she is frightfully mauled," cried his superior; and then in a few seconds he added, "by Jove, she is firing minute guns for help."

"I am sorry to say she is, Sir," replied the junior officer, as he saw the second flash burst forth. "See, Sir Henry, can't you observe she has lost her main-mast; if you watch narrowly when the next gun fires, you will see that is the damage the lightning has done her."

"Hark, Ferrit, did you hear no crash; see, they fire another gun. You are right, she has lost her main-mast, and the fore-mast has followed it. Listen. Ah! they are burning a blue light."

"Ay, and more than that, Sir; your eyes are very sharp, Sir Henry, perhaps you can read what they have got chalked up on the open log board."

"Oh, ah, I see, that is what they are holding the blue light for us to read. No, it is a little too far off for the naked eye; but this fellow will soon bring it home."

Drawing out his spy-glass, and applying it to his purpose, while the first Lieutenant took down

the words as he repeated them, Sir Henry, with some difficulty, deciphered the communication as follows: "We have been struck by lightning, and are foundering, with five feet water in the hold. Can you help us?"

"Good heavens," exclaimed Ferrit, dashing his hand upon the hammock rail, "how can the Admiral expect us to help him? what boat can live in such a sea, even if it could get alongside?"

"That would be utterly impossible."

"Stay, Sir Henry, now I think of it, the Admiral's ship is crowded with women, and if a boat could get under the stern, it might succeed in bringing away a few of them, without the danger of going alongside."

"Yes; but how are we to get the boat under the stern. If I were to order away a boat's crew, you know as well as I do the men would not come aft to man her, that would be bringing our discipline into contempt, and if I attempt to enforce the order, it would be sure to bring on open mutiny."

"Why, yes, Sir, with the sea in its present

state, the men would think themselves just as well off in being hung for mutiny, as drowned in a boat; but we might try for a volunteer crew."

"That is true, and yet it is almost a cruel thing to ask them; but you go forward among the men, Mr. Ferrit, and see what you can effect."

"Please, Sir, I shall be very happy to be one of the crew," said our hero, stepping forward in an instant, and touching his cap, bearing in mind, at the same time, Lady Coxcomb's false counsel, and determined, that when danger was to be found, nobody's name should take precedence of his own, in volunteering any service, however deeply perilous.

"Well said, my boy!" cried Ferrit, patting Charles on the shoulder, while Sir Henry, in a trembling voice, added—

"You do right to volunteer! Death has no power to harm you; it is quite enough that you are in the boat, to ensure her coming back safe, if she go a hundred voyages."

Charles was at a loss at the moment to know what was the exact meaning of this speech, but

the first Lieutenant speedily gave it a complimentary interpretation, by saying, "Death may well be afraid to face so stout a heart as Mr. James possesses, and if example can do any thing with the men, I think he will soon get his boat's crew."

In this, however, the first Lieutenant calculated without his host; no persuasion could induce a second man to come forward and attempt that which to all but the sanguine eye of Charles bore the appearance of certain death. Mr. Ferrit next tried what the influence of emulation would effect in the midshipmen's berth, but Sir Henry's discipline had been of the wrong species to breathe any thing like a chivalrous feeling among the denizens of the cockpit. No vision of promotion even was sufficient to stimulate them to share the dangers Charles had treated so lightly. Thus disappointed, Ferrit had to return to his superior with the humiliating intelligence that not a man in the ship could be found to barter a second life for the chance of the Admiral's safety.

"D—— such a set of thieves!" exclaimed Sir Henry, stamping on the deck with rage; "if ever I catch them in still water again, won't I cut their infernal livers out for this. Think of the disgrace of my Admiral begging a boat of me to save his life, and I not able to get up even a pitiful boat's crew. I wish to Heaven I had the limbs of Briareus, I would first pull on board myself, and if ever I got back again, flog every mother's son of them, beginning with the captain of the after guard and ending with the cook's mate. Go to the boatswain, Mr. Ferrit, and tell him to pipe away the pinnace's crew, whether they like it or not."

"Ay, ay, Sir," answered the first Lieutenant, under much apprehension, saying, before he departed, "in the mean time, had we not better burn a blue light in answer to that shewn by the Admiral, Sir; and by that time you may have considered, how far it would be advisable to pipe away the pinnace's crew or not."

"Consider, Sir," replied Sir Henry, giving way to one of those terrific bursts of passion,

which Charles had often heard attributed to him, but in which till now he had never known him to indulge, "I'll thank you to remember, Mr. Ferrit, I never give an order without amply considering it in all its details; do as I command you, Sir, first, and burn the blue light afterwards."

"Ay, ay, Sir," answered Ferrit, departing quite convinced as to the mode in which his ill-judged superior's tyrannical conduct would issue: it being on the face of it no very likely thing that fourteen men would allow themselves to be condemned to death by the word of a superior they detested, when not even the voice of honour nor distinction had stimulus sufficient to induce them to undertake the risk.

In a few minutes the shrill whistle of the boatswain was heard piping clear above the horrors of the gale, and then followed also in feeble contention with its tumult, the indistinct cry, "Away there, pinnace's crew, away! All hands hoist out boat."

The only effect produced by this summons was, that every man and boy, except the boat-

swain and officers, quitted the upper deck and went below, a most palpable proof, if any had been really wanted, not only how completely the bonds of discipline had been loosened, but that the seamen were prepared for all the extremes of mutiny, rather than be forced to obey an order which they considered unjustifiable. The sailors having gained the main-deck, at once rendered into very forcible language their notions on the subject.

"What the devil, is the Admiral's crew any more than we are at such a time as this?" said of the seamen, "they have had their chance in the gale as well as we have, so why should we be called on when they have lost their chance, to fling ours after it. If they had seen us going down, I should like to know how many pinnace's crews they would have sent to help us out of the mess."

"Not one," answered several of the men.

"Ay," said the first speaker, "and that is just what we will send to them then, and since our infernal skipper has forced us into shewing

a bit of our mind, we may as well now go on, we cannot be worse off than we are. He would be sure to hang the whole crew of us, if he ever caught us in a harbour again, so I vote we just break open the spirit room, make ourselves happy while we can, and leave him to look after the ship himself, since he is so blessed fond of it."

"Hurra! hurra!" cried the excited seamen, receiving this proposition with three round cheers: and without further thought or deliberation, the rude crew rushed below to carry their purpose into effect.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE Sir Henry was yet fuming and stamping on the deck, at what he called the cowardice of his men; word was sent him by the first Lieutenant, that the seamen had broken open the hold in which the spirits were kept, and had already broached the rum upon the lower deck. Sir Henry's cheek, pale at all times, assumed a still more deadly tint at this intelligence; having ordered the Captain of the Marines into his presence, and learnt from this officer, that he could trust to the good behaviour of his party, he gave orders that the latter should be marched below, having their muskets loaded with ball cartridge, under the protection of which, the spirit hatch should be nailed down by the carpenter's crew at all risks;—then turning to his first Lieutenant,—

"Now, Ferrit, write on the log board—'We cannot get men to volunteer a boat, and they have preferred mutiny to being forced to man one.'"

"Ay, ay, Sir," replied Ferrit, taking up the chalk for the desired purpose; but, before he had executed more than the first word, Charles timidly approached his elbow, and said—

"I think, Mr. Ferrit, though there is no chance of a boat living in this sea, we might still manage to save some of the women, and perhaps a few of the officers out of the flag-ship."

"How, my boy?" demanded Ferrit, anxious to hear any proposition for the credit of the ship.

"What?" demanded Sir Henry, catching at the conversation, and still more interested in it. Mr. Ferrit, briefly repeated what had been said by Charles, and the latter was called on for his plan.

"What I propose, Sir Henry, is this," replied our hero, "since the flag-ship has been

lismasted, we, of course, are driving to leeward aster than she is, and must, therefore, get ahead of her. In the first place then, I would venture to suggest, that we take one of the studding sails, make it fast to two of the booms top and bottom, loading the lower one with shot to make it sink, and attaching good stout halyards to the four ends of the two spars. Next by dropping the whole overboard astern, and making it fast inboard, we shall, by this means be dragging after us an immense weight of water, and so enable the flag-ship to scud a little past us, and get to leeward; then, while we edge down on her quarter, as nearly as possible, I will go overboard with a single halyard line, and swim on board her."

"That won't do," returned Sir Henry, considering the plan for a few minutes; "you forget that dismasted as the flag-ship may be, she is scudding through the water many miles an hour, and if you were to go overboard, as you propose, you would be left a long way behind by both ships in the briefest space; and, by the time you had exhausted your line, you would

be towed through these heavy seas, without being able to get back to either ship, and so be drowned in ten minutes."

"The risk is very imminent, I admit, Sir Henry, but, I am willing to risk it with your permission; still, I see you are quite right as to its not being practicable in the way I mentioned, I forgot the rate at which we are scudding. I see now we ought to be ahead of the flag-ship, so that she would run down upon my course, and pick me up, which, having done, Sir Henry, she could, by means of the halyard round my body, haul on board a stout hawser from the Tartar, which you, as going at the greatest speed, could keep taut at your own pleasure, and so by having a block reeved on it, haul on board as many of her passengers and crew as possible, before the flag-ship went down."

"What do you say, Mr. Ferrit; do you think that is practicable," inquired the Captain, turning to his first Lieutenant.

"Why, yes, Sir; I think we might manage this, though it must all depend upon the

swimmer, since going over board in such an awful sea is a still greater risk than going aloft the other night."

"The risk is the glory of it," cried Charles, with as much glee as if he was about to propose swimming the Thames, instead of throwing himself upon all but certain death.

"There are only one or two little precautions I wish to take, before I go overboard, and those I will run down and complete, while the ship is being got into her proper berth."

"Aye, do, my boy," said the first Lieutenant, to whom these observations had been addressed, and then as soon as Charles's head had disappeared beneath the hatchway, Mr. Ferrit turned to the Captain, adding, "Is it not almost a pity, Sir, to let that fine boy throw himself away? he must be drowned in five minutes!"

"Let him distinguish the short life he has," said a voice close to the Lieutenant's elbow, "a few hours more or less, and we must all share the same grave."

Ferrit turned round, and Lady Coxcomb stood beside him. He started to hear such words proceeding from female lips, but knowing that it was no extraordinary matter for her's to propound strange doctrines, he said no more.

"Well," interrupted Sir Henry, breaking the silence that ensued, "if this last hope is to be tried, we had better get the ship into a proper position to avail ourselves of it, and telegraph back to the Admiral, that he may be prepared to pick up our messenger."

"Ay, ay, Sir," replied Ferrit, now perceiving that Charles's fate must rest on the aid of Heaven alone. At once going to the helm he gave the necessary orders for steering the Tartar down ahead of the flag-ship, while, he himself wrote on the log-board, "*We will run ahead of you, and drop a man on board, with a hawser—pick him up—no boat can live,*"—"nor man either," added Ferrit, with a sigh for the fate of Charles, whose gentle manners, and heroic deeds, had gained in the Lieutenant's breast the strongest esteem for him.

By the time that this was effected, and the blue light shewn to the Admiral, the Tartar was rapidly drawing down on the starboard bow of the disabled ship, and Charles stood on the quarter-deck, prepared for his deadly adventure.

As they drew near the dismasted hulk, the first Lieutenant cried out to the quarter-master at the wheel, "Starboard your helm—Starboard.—Let us pass as close to her bows as we possibly can without touching, while I see if I can throw a rope on board.—Gunners bring the blue lights aft on the poop, and one of you get out and burn a couple, one after the other, in the mizen chains; hold them down as low as you can, that we may try to see what we are about, if possible."

While these orders were being obeyed, the Tartar rapidly approached the flag-ship, when the latter put her helm down a little to meet her consort as nearly as possible half way, both ships being obliged to be very wary in their manœuvres for fear of encountering that

frequently fatal accident, broaching-to in the trough of the sea.

At last, by slow degrees, the Tartar had approached within some thirty yards of the disabled flag, and while the gunners continued to burn the blue lights in the mizen chains, the strong white glare thus reflected, fell upon the sea-battered bows of the Admiral, displaying the bowsprit gone, the foremast and main-mast carried away within a few feet of the deck, and the shattered stumps still remaining, the gear and rigging flying in the gale in every direction, many of the ports broken and shattered, and flapping to and fro as she fell heavily into the sea; now receiving the whole inundation of the water as it dashed into her ruined gangways, and again as she rose upon the summit of the waves, allowing its briny torrents to rush out again, while the scuppers poured forth innumerable jets at every roll.

Melancholy as this spectacle appeared, telling of departed power and impending destruction, mocking as it were the vain child

of clay, who so often assumes to himself the pride of mastering the elements, a part of the picture far more frightful and harrowing yet remains to be described.

Above the range of the forecastle hammock nettings were grouped a number of helpless women, many of them young and beautiful, some of them clasping children to their breasts, and all of them, by every wild attitude that despair could dictate, and every touching supplication that fear could frame, imploring and beseeching the officers of the Tartar to save them.

"Poor creatures," said Ferrit, as he beheld this spectacle, "one would think we were gods not men, to hear those cries and see those wild attitudes of entreaty, and yet before another hour has passed, how many of you must rest in heaven."

"Do you see the Admiral, Ferrit?" demanded Sir Henry.

"Yes Sir, there he stands; can't you see his grey hair flying about in the wind, just behind the women?"

"Oh! yes, I see him now; this is your time to throw; we shall never be nearer than we are now."

"Yes, Sir," answered Ferrit, then hailing the flag-ship as he drew his arm back with the coil of rope; "Look out on the bow there!"

With whatever anxiety the parties on the deck of the foundering vessel might have looked for the rope, now attempted to be flung to them, this is quite clear, there was one on board the Tartar who watched the proceeding with equal vigilance, and ten times more jealousy. This was our hero. Were we to say that he would have been grieved had the rope been caught by those on board the flag, and thus he himself deprived of the opportunity of signalizing his daring, we should certainly do him great injustice, he was far too unselfish to be guilty of any such thoughts; this, however, we may admit without prejudice to him, that while the first Lieutenant drew back his arm to cast the rope on board, something seemed almost to impede the free drawing of his breath,

and when that rope had been hurled and missed, he darted forward with a proud alacrity, and putting into the first Lieutenant's hands one end of that single halyard, the other extremity of which was by a running noose made fast round his own waist, he said—

"Now, Sir, if I am to be of any use to them I had better lose no time, for I see already she has sunk very nearly down to her lower deck ports in the water."

"God bless you, my boy!" replied Ferrit, shaking our hero by the hand upon the poop, an example which Sir Henry immediately followed, while from the strong light thrown on Charles's person, the whole of this touching leave-taking was visible on board the flag-ship, whose officers replied to it with a loud cheer, which the gale brought plainly down to leeward, where the Tartar now was.

"Now remember, my boy," said Ferrit, as the last thing, "if you find you can't live in this sea, and want to be hauled on board again, you give the signal halyards three distinct pulls, and I will haul you back."

"Very well, Sir, I will; but I hope that is not likely. On the other hand, the moment you feel one steady distinct strain, you will know that I have got safely on board the flag; so you may then bend on the two inch rope, and as soon as we give a steady pull at the rope, then bend on a good stout hawser."

Before another word could be said, Charles had slipped over the side, and with as little hesitation as if he were merely descending into a bath of rose-water, let himself down into that terrific ocean, which was not only so disturbed by the fierce fury of the gale, but swarming with those ferocious monsters of the deep, who are taught by their predatory natures, to be most on the look out for food when the waters in which they live are the most disturbed. As long as the officers on board either ship could behold the intrepid swimmer, it may be easily imagined with how much anxiety his course was watched by all hands. Soon, however, the vast hollows of

the waves completely swallowed up the little dot that had ventured to contend with their might, and nothing but hope and conjecture remained as to his fate.

CHAPTER VI.

The preparations which Charles had made for his undertaking were simply these:—he knew where the butcher kept hanging up on the orlop deck a number of bullock's bladders, and taking half a dozen of these he poured about a wineglass full of rum into each to prevent their being acted upon by the water, blew them nearly full of air, and after securing their mouths, tied them all together to a band which he passed round his breast, so that the support of the air came just in the centre of the chest, and this enabled him to rise more readily over the vast masses of water against which he had to strive; while one bladder he took the precaution of filling entirely with spirit, from knowing how necessary is that

stimulus to those long immersed in fluid or exposed to cold; besides this he possessed a sharp knife in case of emergencies, and certainly enjoyed the blessing of a clear conscience, the two great requisites, according to all naval creeds, for every species of high adventure.

On first finding himself plunged over head and ears in the bubbling sea, the only pang of misgiving or apprehension that had yet assailed him crossed his mind, but pressing to his heart the gift and the hair of her for whom he thus ardently strove to create a name not unworthy of her, his own high and indomitable courage made smooth as a mirror the tumultuous roar of waters hissing around him. Without casting back one glance at the ship, whose comparative safety he had quitted, on he swam. Thanks to the amendment in his former plan, he had not to put forward any very great exertion, further than sufficient speed to get as nearly as possible in the direct course of the flag-ship as if indeed he were now only anxious to be run down by it.

As Sir Henry had said she was proceeding at an infinitely swifter rate that he could by any possibility have imagined, and in the course of a few minutes on came the enormous hulk, wrecked, shattered, and all but masterless; now plunging down to her bowsprit in the phosphorescent waters that sparkled and glittered and fired around her, in the deep, dark gloom of unbroken morning; making at every movement a rushing and complaining dash amid the waters that was borne distinctly to the ears of our hero, as he lay like some little tiny insect upon the bosom of an infuriated mammoth. Now with great difficulty he could see the dark hull raised up to the threatening heavens, where day was scarcely beginning to glimmer faintly, while he, in proportion sank down into the trough of those vast liquid abysses as if about to visit the dominions of the dreary Dis himself.

"Now," muttered Charles, "I begin to see that when men talk of the waves running mountains high there is no exaggeration of the truth in the expression, and I only wish those

who can doubt it, were in such a situation as this, to prove the correctness of the recital, not that this is any punishment; a more magnificent spectacle of nature in one of her grandest moods I never beheld, and certainly to lie here, untouched by the slightest emotion of fear, and be rocked on these stupendous billows, without the slightest trouble, to be carried hither and thither as the vast waves list, is to possess a wild and savage happiness that no monarch ever yet could know."

To a spirit so gloriously bold, so daring, so fate-defying as this, what achievement was not possible? Waiting quietly his opportunity, till the enormous but rapidly sinking flag-ship approached, Charles just made occasionally a few strokes with his arms, so as to keep upon her starboard bow, and not allowing himself to be in the least degree moved by the imminent peril in which he lay of being either drawn under her bows by the current of water, as she was drifted over it, or the still greater probability of his being unhappily struck upon the head as he endeavoured to get on board by one of her

anchors, ports, catheads, or other portions protruding from her side, he allowed the huge vessel to approach close to him, then watching his opportunity, as she dipped down he made one vigorous dash for her side, and contrived to get his arm inside one of the ports before she rose, here then he continued hanging while she surmounted the crest of the wave, and indeed until her next descent, when the rush of water again floating him, he was enabled to make a still further struggle, and thus at last contrived to scramble in-board, swiftly make fast with a running knot, the bight of the signal halyards several fathoms of which he hauled from the Tartar in case of accident, and then, without casting off the end from his own waist, he seized the standing part of one of the bowsprit shrouds lying loose, and stepping outside the port as the quickest way of getting on deck, proceeded to haul himself up hand over hand, no easy matter to a less athletic person. In a few seconds his dripping head appeared above the bulwark of the forecastle.

So many minutes had elapsed since the

anxious spectators assembled here, had last beheld our hero battling the waves below, that all hands had given him up for lost; the long reiterated shouts of joy with which he was received, soon however, and most fully, paid him for all the peril he had undergone.—The almost heart-broken women, who, though they knew not the precise way in which his coming was to prove their safety, were yet perfectly alive to the fact, crowded round Charles and embraced him with the most frantic transport, amid tears and blessings. The old Admiral himself, with his grey hair floating in the gale, in accents too full of meaning, to be very distinct, said loudly, as he shook our hero's hand in both his own, "Of all the bold deserving undertakings I ever beheld in the heat of war, you, young man, have accomplished the greatest; I give you your promotion on this spot, and if ever I live to reach England, every energy and interest I have shall be dedicated to get it confirmed and furthered!—Are you hurt?"

"Not in the least, Sir," modestly replied

Charles, "I only remain silent from simple want of language to express my gratitude."

"Not a word—not a word.—It is all on our side, I did not think it possible for a human being to traverse such a sea and live. Nothing but the anxiety of saving these unfortunate ladies, should ever have induced me to communicate to the Tartar our distress; how are their crew behaving? Ours, I am sorry to say, have long since been beyond all controul."

Charles, on hearing this, at once communicated the fact, that the Tartar's men were in the same condition; though, from well timed delicacy, he forbore to say, that it was the request of the Admiral for help, that had given the final blow to discipline on board Sir Henry's ship.

While this conversation was going on with Admiral Roupell, his officers, without the loss of a moment's time, got hold of the signal halyards which our hero had brought on board, and rapidly hauled in from the Tartar, first a stout

rope and next a six-inch hawser, on which a large block had first been rove.

Now came the trying part of the question for the ladies; the only hope of saving them was by suspending them in slings, each sling traversing the hawser or a similar block, so as to run easily, and the whole being attached to one another at such distances, that in case of any accident, they could not when immersed in the water effect any mischief, by their mutual struggles. Now, also, arose the difficulty of who was to have precedence; the Admiral said, that it was his duty as chief to quit his ship the last, but his daughter, who was indeed his only child, declared that nothing could induce her to save her own life, while that of her father was still left in danger. As a matter of course it necessarily followed that none of the other ladies, could have the bad grace to take precedence of the Admiral's only child, and therefore all parties at once united to implore that the Admiral himself would yield to the general wish, and accompany the first party to the Tartar.

After much valuable time had been lost, before the old veteran would consent to this arrangement, he at last acceded on the express understanding and arrangement that Charles, to whom under Heaven they all owed their safety, should be amongst the number, and the next in place to the ladies: the Admiral insisting on giving him the post of honour even before himself.

No further time was now mispent: with the utmost celerity that could be employed, the various ladies, were slung each with the utmost care; after the ladies were placed Charles, and finally the Admiral; the whole were then steadied by a rope made fast to the last block, and gently eased off from on board the flag-ship, a similar rope was also hauled on board the Tartar as rapidly as possible, the hawser being kept as taut as it could be rendered in safety; and the whole of the party thus dragged through all intervening obstacles to Sir Henry's ship. As it was soon found impossible to keep the bend or bight of the hawser from touching the waves, through

the greater portion of the middle, so as a matter of course it followed that whenever this occurred, the unfortunate passengers were dragged bodily through the immense mass of opposing water.

On arriving at the first of the enormous waves, the screams of the ladies were heard through all the tempest, but as it was impossible otherwise to save them, they were hastened, with still greater rapidity, along their watery path; and all of them having fainted before they came to the next immersion, the rest of the transit was performed in silence, and their senseless forms pulled on board the Tartar, dripping and dishevelled, and looking far more like the fabulous mermaids than any human creatures.

As soon as the ill-fated passengers had arrived at their place of refuge, the surgeon and his assistants, together with Lady Coxcomb's servants, were all in attendance, ready to render their utmost services. Only one of the children was found to have escaped the general death that awaited all these more

tender sufferers; but of the adults every one survived. The blocks were now rapidly hauled back to the flag-ship, for the remaining officers to avail themselves of the proffered safety, and after some lapse of time, the signal was again given, to intimate that the Tartar's crew were to pull on board another cargo.

With every alacrity this pleasing task was commenced, but while yet it was in the very act of completion, a dreadful groan, or rather a series of shrieks came down upon the tempest, to the anxious ears of those who were discharging their kind offices on board the Tartar. The hawser suddenly fell slack and powerless into the waves below, and an universal cry proclaimed "she's foundered!" As to any one having seen the flag-ship go down, that was scarcely possible, from the want of light, day certainly then not having dawned sufficiently to enable any eyes to distinguish positively whether this was so or not; at any rate, the first Lieutenant Ferrit, who was in person superintending the safety apparatus, took the wiser course of having the rope hauled in as rapidly

as possible; and, like a good fisherman, was rewarded by feeling something at the end of his line, and ultimately rescuing four of the unhappy officers from the water. They were at first quite insensible, and having been taken below for restoration, blue lights were burnt and minute guns fired, but no answer to any of these signals was ever returned.

As soon as the last comers from the flagship were sufficiently recovered to enter into an account of what took place on their quitting their vessel, they at once confirmed all the fears that were entertained respecting her, by the declaration that she had gone down while they were in the act of putting off; as the officers, it seems, were already slung, and in safety, when the accident happened.

The Flag Captain having been the last to quit the ship, and unfortunately not being prepared for his vessel so suddenly foundering, it seems that he had neglected, or was unable, to cut away the hawser from her bow, where the petty officers, who were still sober, were waiting for their turn to be drawn off; and

thus the seventy-four having gone down with its whole weight on that frail support, the hawser had parted in the middle, and with it instantly carried away the still frailer rope, by which the officers were to have been hauled on board. Only the few foremost ones therefore, who remained on that portion of the line still fast to the Tartar, escaped, and the rest of the unfortunate sufferers, dragged down by the flag-ship, had, in the bosom of the deep, found that repose which humanity is so anxious to forbear to the last.

CHAPTER VII.

Slowly and heavily the ninth day dawned on the survivors of the storm, but as yet it gave not the slightest token of bringing any alleviation to the miseries of those numbers who had been so long kept in such a state of suspense, as to whether they were to live or die.

The great majority of the men had, as we have seen, become utterly indifferent as to the question. Owing, however, to the preventive step of ordering out the marines, with instructions to fire, if necessary, on the seamen, should the latter pursue any further their plunder of the spirit-room, the sailors modestly contented themselves with a bare sufficiency to get entirely drunk throughout the next twenty-four hours, and then left Fate to please herself

as to what followed next. Fortunately, such was the position of affairs, that the services of these worthies would have been of little or no avail, even if tendered in their most efficient form.

The Tartar was nearly a new ship, and therefore made but little or no water, so that her pumps did not require working: and as to her sails, as there was no alternative left but to scud, it followed equally as a matter of course, that the few quarter-masters, marines, and midshipmen, who still remained faithful to their duty, were quite equal to all that was required. For the time, therefore, if no unforeseen danger should arise, or the ship be drifted on some unknown land,—no unlikely matter, as they had not the slightest conception of their real position—there was every probability that the Tartar might still be able to weather out the gale. About noon, however, as near as they could guess, the whole sky became more than usually overcast, and while still fearing and imagining that some fresh calamity was about to dog their path, the surprise of all on board was

only equalled by the extravagance of their joy, when absolute torrents of rain drove every one from the deck, and conveyed to all minds the saving intelligence that the fury of the gale was spent. These expectations were not disappointed. After the water had descended with the utmost violence for nearly two hours, the wind subsided almost as suddenly as it had arisen, and about three o'clock in the afternoon the Tartar was lying hove-to under her fore and main top-sails, waiting for the sky to clear, and thus enable her master to get such an observation as should determine their position on the map; the wind having now so moderated, that double-reefed top-sails might have been set without danger. A few hours after this improvement in their condition, the Admiral desired the attendance of all the officers in the ward-room, while the Chaplain read prayers. This was not at all in Sir Henry Coxcomb's line; but he attended with the rest of the officers, together with all the ladies who were sufficiently recovered. The service was no sooner completed, than the Admiral rose,

and walking up to Charles, little conscious of what was to follow, laid his hand on the latter's shoulder, saying, " Mr. James, I this morning told you that I had given you your promotion on a spot that your bravery and humanity had rendered sacred; I now beg to repeat to you, in the presence of all these officers, my conviction, as to a fact so manifest it scarcely needs declaring, that but for your intrepidity not a single life would have been saved out of the unhappy ship which lately bore my flag, and which this morning foundered, with nearly all on board. Since I have gained this vessel, fortunately, under Providence, by your means, I have also been informed that this is not the only opportunity which you have seized of displaying the same marked attributes of a great and heroic mind, and that if the Lieutenant of your watch had availed himself, as he was bound to do, of your vigilance on the night when this hurricane first broke upon us, some thousands of beings, since sacrificed, might now have been living in our ill-fated convoy, to bless heaven for life and strength. I not only

now order my clerk to make out your commission, but I here appoint you my Flag lieutenant, so long as I remain in this ship, in the room of the lamented young officer who perished in my late ship this morning. I shall not take you with me out of the Tartar, it is true, because I learn with pleasure from Lady Coxcomb, that you have been so fortunate as to secure the friendship of herself and Sir Henry, by another act equally meritorious, and conferring on them both the greatest obligations. But this you may rely on my doing; your name shall be borne on my flag-ship wherever I go. You shall have the first vacancy to which the rules of the service will allow me to appoint you. One of the Lieutenants of the Tartar shall discharge your duty on board my ship; and further, whenever it is possible for my influence or services to advance your views, you may command both, as entirely as if you were my own son. I only wish that Heaven had granted such a blessing to my old age."

As the Admiral said this, he extended his hand to Charles. To the astonishment of every

one, however, the latter not only evinced no signs of haste to accept the proffered kindness, but appeared actually about to refuse it altogether. Presently staggering forward a few paces, like a drunken man, he uttered a slight cry, and fell senseless to the deck.

When this catastrophe occurred, nothing could exceed the screams and agitation of the fairer part of the audience; who, equally captivated by his heroic deeds, his gentle and unassuming disposition, and the extremely handsome and delicate cast of his expressive features, esteemed him with a degree of admiration not easily described. The surgeon, however, quieted their fears, by assuring them that his patient had only fainted, and while they marvelled over the exquisite nature of a disposition, that the rudest danger could not appal, but the voice of kindness so strongly affect, the leech had Charles conveyed to his hammock, and in the course of an hour was enabled to send a most satisfactory report to those so desirous of his welfare.

On the following morning a distant sail

was seen in the horizon of the still troubled ocean. On coming up, she proved to be His Majesty's frigate Arachnoid, on her way home to England from India. She conveyed to the officers of the Tartar, intelligence that the latter was only about three thousand miles out of her course.

The Admiral now held a consultation with his daughter, who was going out to join her husband at Jamaica, he being the Colonel of a regiment in that island—as to whether it would not be wiser to go on board the frigate, and at once return to England. With the scattering and loss of his convoy, had in a great degree ended the object of his command; he had missed all end or aim in going on to the West Indies. His daughter also had lost her outfit, and the idea of arriving in a foreign colony, unpossessed of the most ordinary article of comfort or clothing conveyed to the mind of the lady so discouraging a prospect that she at once embraced most cheerfully the idea of returning home. As for Sir Henry it was quite clear the necessities of his ship required his sailing to the nearest port, and there repairing damages. This thenwas the

determination adopted, and the frigate was ordered to keep the Tartar company during the night; and on the next morning, the sea having subsided sufficiently, the Admiral, his daughter, and one or two other ladies, bade adieu to the seventy-four, and hastened on board the frigate.

Charles looked with a lingering, anxious eye towards the latter, as she set sail for England.

The Admiral took leave of him in the kindest manner imaginable, saying, "that he went to secure for him his promotion, for which an Order in Council was necessary." Charles hinted something of his strong wish to return home, but it was so strongly and apparently so kindly resisted by Lady Coxcomb, that Charles had time to reflect, how problematical after all his promotion was, and depending wholly on a favour rarely if ever granted to a subject, namely, an order in council, the special privilege of royal blood.* Under these circum-

* The reader will remember the circumstances under which this rare mark of royal consideration was extended, to promote a young officer during the war to his lieutenancy, before the period of his midshipman's time had passed. – *See James' Nav. Hist.*

stances, with many a bitter sigh, he entrusted to the Admiral's care whole hosts of letters, addressed to his sister, but certainly intended for another eye, equally with her own; and having watched the frigate till she faded from his vision, he ascended to the fore-top, and for two hours indulged himself in the most tender and melancholy reveries on those he loved so dearly.

CHAPTER VIII.

During the whole time that the frigate kept company with the Tartar, considerable excitement prevailed among the crew of the latter vessel. The strictest watch that could be kept, was maintained upon every movement of the smaller vessel; and it was only when the Admiral fairly made sail that the ship's company of the seventy-four appeared to feel any relief. The real facts of the case were as follow:

The great majority of the Tartar's crew were fully aware that they had committed a gross act of mutiny, in deserting their duty, and breaking open the spirit room during the storm, and with every certainty expected that some steps would be taken against them by Sir Henry

Coxcomb and the Admiral, on the moment of the frigate's arrival. Against this they were all prepared to act as one man. Great was their surprise, when the frigate sailed quietly away without a single mutineer having been called to account. The perfect knowledge they possessed of Sir Henry's character induced them to mistrust this appearance of a pardon; and no sooner was the watch called after the Admiral's departure, than the mutineers took counsel together as to their future proceedings. Thus far the seamen had judged most rightly; Sir Henry Coxcomb had used every effort in his power to have the ringleaders of the mutiny seized, and sent to England for trial in the frigate that carried home the Admiral. To this, however, the latter would by no means consent. He represented, and very wisely, the utter impossibility of taking these men, should they be supported by the rest of the crew; and foreseeing only the certainty of much bloodshed and little or no benefit to the service, he wisely imposed his strictest orders upon the fiery Baronet, to make sail for the Cape of Good Hope, and there

to take the ordinary steps for a Court-martial. Whether, by some extraordinary means, these orders had been overheard by the servants, and so had reached the ears of the seamen, or whether simply their own sharp wits had suggested the probability of such commands, it is now for ever impossible to decide ; be that as it may, the steps which the seamen took were precisely those to which, in all probability, they would have resorted had they been fully aware of the councils of their superiors.

That the crew possessed in their conclaves some men of no ordinary capacities, and that the whole of them as a body were determined and able to follow out the plans of their leaders, will at once be evident from the mode in which the mutiny was conducted.

As soon as the frigate had parted company with the Tartar, the latter commenced steering for the Cape of Good Hope. Not the slightest notice was taken of the future either by the Captain or the crew. The former indulged in no punishments for the past outbreak, no arresting, no capstan-head lectures. Nothing that

could betray his intentions or terrify his men by denunciations as to the coming trial. Perhaps this very silence and forbearance only the more increased the fears of the culprits, or confirmed their resolutions: at any rate, they, on the other hand, took the matter in a manner equally cool and determined. All the regular duties of the ship were performed with the utmost exactitude and regularity. No case of drunkenness, nor slackness, nor contempt of discipline occurred, and a stranger to the past would have concluded from the general aspect of affairs in the seventy-four, that nothing had ever occurred to derange her internal regulation.

Thus affairs continued until the Tartar had arrived within one day's sail of the Cape, when, no one in authority having the slightest suspicion of the danger at hand, it became generally known that on the ensuing noon the master expected to anchor the ship in Table Bay.

At an early hour on the following morning, soon after day-break, the officers of the watch were overpowered, their hands secured behind

them, the cabin door burst open, and the interior of that naval sanctuary, the Captain's cabin, gained by the mutineers before Sir Henry could make the slightest resistance. In vain the baronet stormed, my lady screamed. The mutineers had taken their steps so surely that force availed nothing, and they were not very likely to forego their advantages from mere cajolery.

Having placed two sentinels over their late Captain, whom they had previously stripped of everything like a weapon, as well as resorted to means of the same effective nature with the subordinate officers, so as to be sure that no successful rising could be attempted against their new-born authority, the crew selected a committee composed of the petty officers and best seamen in the ship, and into the hands of these delegates they committed the charge and command of the seventy-four, the course of which was immediately altered for the southern ocean, and in this course they continued sailing for many weeks. During this time the direction of the ship was kept a profound secret from

the officers, who therefore knew not where they were. Everything that bore the slightest appearance of a man-of-war was carefully avoided, while however several merchant-vessels were by the mutineers brought to and plundered of provisions or water. Those of the officers who were popular among the crew were allowed to be at liberty, having been previously cautioned to ask no questions. Among the first to be so distinguished was Charles, who however rarely profited by the indulgence, as he thought and wisely that it might draw on him the jealousy of Sir Henry, or some of the other officers who remained strictly confined. Few privations could have been more odious than this mingled confinement and suspense; though at last, like all other worldly troubles, there came a termination to the matter, which however many of the sufferers would have been glad to change back again for the original woe.

CHAPTER IX.

Five bells or half-past six o'clock had barely sounded in the morning watch of a beautiful day, when the mutineers sent a message to Lady Coxcomb by her maid, desiring her to rise and prepare to leave the ship with her husband.

To this modest request Lady Coxcomb sent back the most entire defiance; on which two of the delegates actually forced their way into the after cabin, and held a levee round her couch. In answer to her scolding, Jack Tar very coolly but somewhat rudely, advised her ladyship to put on her clothes, and make herself decent; adding, very significantly,—

"We have had quite enough of you, Marm, on board this ship for some time past; so now

we have got up a little pleasure excursion for the skipper yonder, and as we know you never could bear to be separated, why you see you had better bear his Worship company; though you may rely upon it we are all next door to broken-hearted to lose sight of so amiable a young woman; I am sure," added the boatswain's mate, who gave utterance to these sarcasms, "I shall hardly know how to let fall the cat for punishment, when I no longer can have the satisfaction of knowing that your ladyship is looking on, admiring the game as it may be from the cabin window."

With these and many similar taunts, the seamen replied to Lady Coxcomb's bitter upbraidings and remonstrances; at last when she found that no efforts of reason could put them from their purpose, she boldly defied their power, declaring that no force should compel her to dress herself. This last effort was however speedily vanquished, when the men told her with an oath, that if it would afford any gratification to her, she was quite at liberty

to go about with just as little or as much drapery as she pleased, but that dressed or undressed go she should. Informing her ladyship she had only a few minutes to decide and act, they left her in consultation with her maid to determine, as she chose, the important question before her. The pinnace having been hoisted out and stowed with a moderate quantity of provisions, the whole of the officers were crowded into its narrow compass, together with the carpenter and gunner: the boatswain, by some extraordinary infection, was suddenly taken ill, and did not make his appearance.

Lady Coxcomb and her maid were finally added to this unfortunate crew, though screaming and making every other possible resistance. This, however, was in vain; in a few minutes her ladyship found herself seated by her child and husband, with every prospect of having to brave the utmost fury of the sea in an open boat. During the whole of this singular scene, Sir Henry Coxcomb sat by gnashing his bleeding lip, as was his invariable custom when anything agitated him, till the surrounding officers

almost expected to behold the under portion absolutely severed! Seemingly aware of the utter futility of any remark, the Baronet made not the slightest attempt to restrain the seamen in the perpetration of any part of their present outrages; at last, when every thing was ready, the ringleaders of the mutiny came to the gangway and looked into the boat, to count if all the officers were there. Seemingly satisfied that their vengeance had missed none of their victims, the order was given to pass the word below, that the pinnace was about to shove off. A pause having been allowed for any straggler to make his way up, and none appearing, the order was at length given to cast off, and in obedience to this command, the tow rope that had hitherto held the pinnace alongside was detached from its hold, and the boat gradually drifted astern—at this instant a cry was heard, some one rushed to the gangway, and our hero appeared hailing the departing pinnace, and exclaiming,—

"Put back a moment for me, Sir Henry; I have been detained against my will." Starting

from the apathy which up to this moment seemed to have possessed her, Lady Coxcomb no sooner heard that voice than she insisted on the immediate compliance with his prayer; and while the mutineers all crowded round our hero, begging him not to add his fate to that of the tyrant they so much detested, the boat of the latter rapidly approached to take him off from the gangway of the Tartar.

It was a sore temptation to our hero's heart to hear the men crowding round him, and imploring him by every entreaty in their power not to leave them,—but Charles remained firm to his duty.

However he might think the poor enslaved seamen had been ill-used in many instances hitherto, whatever he might feel for all they had to undergo,—on this point, fortunately, his judgment was unclouded; to remain behind was to share their guilt, and that he was fully resolved nothing should induce him to do. Turning a deaf ear, therefore, to all that the mutineers kept urging from behind him, he waited until the pinnace was close at hand, and then began

to descend the side. Here took place a curious scene, that has seldom been witnessed before.

The seamen finding that our hero was determined to leave them at all hazards, seemed to have concluded, that the only way to obtain their wish, was by using the same potent measures to detain the unwilling officer, that had already been so successful in expelling the obnoxious; in an instant one of the seamen laid his huge hand upon our hero's collar, and held him as immoveably fast as if he had been Milo bound within the oak; in vain our young friend begged and implored his captors to release him.

"Hold him fast, Jack, hold him fast!" cried the other seamen, thinking they had now found out a certain method of securing their favourite, but in this they had reckoned certainly without their host; not giving them a moment's time to frustrate his design, with the utmost nimbleness our hero slipped his arms from out of his jacket, and plunged resolutely overboard.

A shout of triumph arose from the crew of the pinnace as they witnessed this act of de-

termination on the part of their comrade; while, notwithstanding their disappointment, various sounds of admiration echoed back the cry, even from on board the seventy-four. In a few minutes Charles was picked up by the crew of the boat, and the unfortunate craft proceeded on the disheartening voyage before her.

CHAPTER X.

After buffeting about for many weeks, exposed by day and night to every horror that the human frame can be supposed capable of enduring, after losing several of their party from the effects of the exposure, and the still more distressing consequences of extreme drought, after being twice dismasted by the fury of sudden gales, and finally, having their rudder unshipped and utterly destroyed, distant land was at length discovered. For the twenty-four previous hours no single person in the boat had known the luxury of the slightest taste of water; food had, as a matter of course, not only lost all relish, but become absolutely disgusting in their eyesight; and though few felt

inclined to take upon themselves the office of being their own executioners, still more limited was the number of those who any longer entertained the slightest wish to survive. Utterly careless what the land might prove, towards which they now drifted, they allowed themselves to be borne onwards by the current and a small apology for a sail which had been rigged a few days before; in this state of apathy, the survivors were all lying panting for life, beneath the awning of one of their surviving sails, which they had reared as a protection against the sun, when a sudden shock of some foreign body striking against the pinnace, suddenly caused our hero and one or two of the more active of his companions to spring to their feet. The surprise of all on board may perhaps be imagined, when they beheld themselves alongside of a large Indian war canoe, swarming with savages, all armed with the dangerous looking weapons of their barbarous tribes, and painted so as to give the utmost effect to the ferocious inclinations apparent in their features.

As resistance was utterly impracticable, none, wisely, was attempted. The savages, seeing that everything was left to their own discretion, rushed on board, and took possession, and in the vain hope of deprecating their fury not the slightest obstacle was offered to their conquest.

A certain number having been left in the pinnace to keep watch over their unhappy prisoners, the rest returned into their canoe, and at once paddled away for the shore. Parched with the utmost thirst, the unfortunate officers tried to obtain from their captors a slight draught of water, but this the savages either did not, or would not understand. With the most imperturbable gravity, they watched all the signs made by the parched and expiring officers, and in reply contented themselves with pointing to the distant land ; but, whether by this they meant that all their wants would be supplied on gaining the shore, or simply that once there, they would be put in a condition never to know human want again, was a matter left in the most disagreeable uncertainty.

In the course of two hours the boat arrived in a large harbour, and the officers having been landed, were taken to the wigwam of the chief: here they found themselves surrounded by an immense concourse of the most frightful looking savages, who first pinioned the arms of all their captives together, and then proceeded to hold a council of war.

When this was over, the four principal people approached the group of prisoners, and each made a selection: the chief picked out Lady Coxcomb's maid, the next chooser laid his claw upon Lady Coxcomb.

"A happy choice you have made of it," muttered our hero, unable—in the midst of all his grief, to forbear a smile at what appeared to him so extraordinary a choice. While, however, he was musing on this matter, the third savage stepped up to himself, and drew him out from the circle of his companions; the fourth man here came and gazed at the remaining lots, with the air of one who considers himself to have been hardly used, in having all the best bargains taken from beyond his reach,

before he himself has had an opportunity of selection.

After looking querulously round, in no very amiable manner for some time, he ended by laying his forefinger not a little sulkily on the epauletted shoulder of the gallant Baronet. To these four, water and food were administered in abundance, while the rest were huddled together, and in spite of all the entreaties that they themselves could urge, and all the dumb gestures that our hero and the lady's maid could add to these entreaties, they were hurried off to a distant group of trees, and there allowed to remain in that state of utter cruelty and neglect, which seemed to justify the worst forebodings as to their coming fate.

If any further argument were wanting on this score, it might have been too readily found in the delighting occupation which now appeared to engross every man, woman, and child of the community.

While some parties sung and danced, and made the vilest attempts at music, with instru-

ments of the most discordant character, others were employed in sharpening their knives and creeses; the women and children were busied in gathering together a large pile of brushwood, no very difficult matter, from the quantity at hand, while the sturdiest of the men devoted themselves with the utmost rapidity to digging a huge trench of a circular character, with a mound in the centre, into which mound had been previously driven several huge stakes.

CHAPTER XI.

For a brief space we must now revert from the terrible climax to which the last chapter has brought us, to some little incidents which preceded it in point of time.

Much to the astonishment of every one in the pinnace, Sir Henry's son, who looked so delicate, that any spectator would have imagined the least hardship must prove fatal to him, and who, moreover, unhappy lad, had not long been able to leave his cot, from the frightful accident that so nearly killed him,—this boy survived all the sufferings which had proved fatal to some of the hardiest of his companions. Since the day in question, when he had been brought on board, and placed under the surgeon's care, up to this time, the usual

taciturnity of the youth had progressed into a species of low insanity, or rather idiotcy, which had developed itself in a disinclination to speak, amounting almost to dumbness. In addition to this, Reginald had betrayed a species of incoherence in his remarks from which any impartial person would have augured the worst termination to his illness; but both Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb buoyed themselves up with the most extravagant hopes, that time would once more restore to their child the perfect use of his intellects. Indeed, in proportion as his imbecility became apparent to others, did they appear to cling to the conviction of his gradual improvement.

Before the unfortunate accident, Lady Coxcomb had, it is true, lavished every mark of a mother's fondness on her child, not so, however, Sir Henry. The reader will remember that the gallant Baronet's conduct had been as marked in this, as in any other respect, and that he had scarcely seemed conscious of the boy's existence, save by the orders which he had given, probably at Lady Coxcomb's desire, to

protect the boy from the ordinary hardships of his rank. Now, however, the case was altered. It was one of the few amiable points of Sir Henry's otherwise dark character, that since the affair at Cork, it was difficult to say whether he or Lady Coxcomb had evinced the greatest tenderness for their afflicted son. Throughout the whole of the dreadful exposure, consequent upon the pinnace being sent adrift, both the unhappy parents had constantly denied themselves a large portion of that nutriment which had fallen to their share, to bestow it on their child. A vacant smile was, however, almost the only recognition bestowed by the latter on the horrors that surrounded him. He never expressed either hunger or thirst during the greater part of the time; and remained, poor child, with his head lying on his mother's shoulder, either asleep or dosing. It was the only bright spot in her disposition, and this afflicted boy the only human being towards whom she really entertained any genuine affection; frightfully, as we shall see, did Providence prepare a scourge for her crimes, to reach her

through the only vulnerable point of feeling which she knew.

The crew of the Tartar, when they so unceremoniously informed her ladyship that if she did not depart dressed, they should take the liberty of sending her adrift in a less prepared condition, these rude, but not hard-hearted men, no sooner heard her vociferate for her son, than they immediately offered to allow his remaining on board, and even promised to put him into some merchant-vessel bound for England,—but with a degree of fury that no one could withstand, and that it would perhaps be unfair to term selfish, she insisted on her child not being separated from herself, and both were accordingly lowered down to take their seats in the pinnace.

When the seamen beheld the poor emaciated boy take his place beside his mother, and reflected on the privations and perils to which he must necessarily become exposed, pity for his situation induced them to throw into the boat a number of little luxuries, in the way of blankets, pillows, chicken, wine, &c. which

they certainly would not have troubled themselves to have offered to the more robust exiles.

Finally, when land was descried in the horizon, both Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb found it a great alleviation to their ills that Reginald had endured the dreadful exposure of their past voyage, with so little seeming detriment to his health, and such a total absence of all complaint. When the pinnace had been seized by the war canoe, Lady Coxcomb's cries had been mainly stiffled by a suggestion from Sir Henry, that quiet submission would be the conduct most likely to insure good treatment from the savages, not only towards the rest of the officers, but especially to Reginald. This kept her silent, and little notice being taken of her, she continued to keep her son by her side up to the very time when the chieftains having made their choice, placed her on one side with Sir Henry, Charles, and the lady's maid, and sent the ill-fated youth away with the others. As soon as this had been done, she commenced an outcry which certainly surprised her captors; but, as they ordered

her in no civil manner, in their language of dumb signs to remain quiet, and Sir Henry himself assured her that this was the most likely path towards the protection of her boy, she, seeing that her lamentations did not advance her one step towards getting Reginald brought back to her, consented for a time to try the effects of a more quiet demeanor.

It may easily be imagined with what dreadful anxiety, both Sir Henry and his wife watched the proceedings of the natives, after their only hope had been thus detached from their protection. For this lad every thing in their past lives had been borne or forborne, suffered or transacted, and if he was taken from them, all they had done, every thing they had gone through, had been alike in vain. Bitterly, indeed, had this truth pressed itself upon the mind of Sir Henry, since the period of the accident, and in proportion as the severance of himself and heir was threatened, so the parents increased the eagerness with which they endeavoured to prolong the faintest apology for an existence in their child ; even though this

should animate the body only, and leave blank and dead the superior intelligence that governed it.

By degrees, as Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb watched the preparations of the savages, —apprehension deepened into fear,—fear ripened into agony, and then the hideous conviction as to their child's impending fate soon followed. Utterly deprived as they were of all power to avert the coming ill, for a time they strove to cheat themselves into a belief that no evil really could be intended, but that simply some custom or ceremony was in preparation with a view to strike Europeans with an awful notion of the power and greatness of their captors.

The reader will be able to form a very sufficient notion of the intense torture which Lady Coxcomb underwent, when she beheld the heart-rending preparations of the stake and fire-trench, which corresponded so minutely with some account which she had read of the mode in which some of the savage Islanders of the South Seas have been accustomed to celebrate

the rites of cannibalism, when we state the short and simple fact that her proud and untameable spirit was reduced to such an excess of agony as to burst forth even into prayer.

Lips that had not, even in her dreams, muttered an appeal to Omnipotence, now supplicated with the most passionate and humble entreaty, the awful Majesty of Heaven, whose ordinances she had systematically violated, whose mercies she had returned with ingratitude, and whose existence she had treated with equal contempt and disbelief, through nearly the whole of her existence.

Let it not be imagined, however, that this was done openly. No, that this appeal and prayer really occupied her agonized spirit, was seen by her companions only through those irrepressible starts and exclamations which defied for their restraint every effort of a mind excruciated to the verge of madness. Short, but passionate bursts of supplication, with intense but disguised wringing of the hands, which she vainly endeavoured to conceal, as she sat on the bare ground rocking herself to and fro,

as if to assuage her torment, frequent exclamation of the name and attributes of the Deity often checked, and suppressed even in the act of utterance, a contraction of the brows, which no effort at dissimulation could make smooth. The racked, and almost heart-broken, depression of the mouth! nay, more, the rebellious and quick succeeding tears! these proclaimed to the bystanders the mental martyrdom this proud and guilty woman was at last enduring.

So painful was the scene we have been attempting to describe, that Charles, who little knew what deep interest he had in it, would have rejoiced at the personal liberty that might have permitted him to walk beyond all witness of it. His savage captors would, however, as he perceived, have speedily met any demonstration of departure, however short or slight, with summary evidences of their displeasure. Perforce, therefore, he was obliged to stand by, and share, in a slight degree, the misery he beheld thus forcibly personified before him by the sufferings of one whom he had always

hitherto regarded with deep respect and the most grateful esteem. To this conduct also he was the more impelled from seeing how anxious Sir Henry evidently was, to hide and cover the spectacle of his imperious helpmate's spirit thus breaking down beneath the burden imposed on it. To Charles's feelings it appeared but natural, that the husband, who hitherto had scarcely attempted—and certainly had never been able successfully, to conceal the dominion which his wife possessed over him, it certainly did appear natural that such a man should be anxious to hide from the world any weakness of a being whom he had, as it were, acknowledged as his superior. When, therefore, Charles clearly detected this feeling on the part of his superior officer, he respected, and so lent his utmost to second it.

For this purpose Sir Henry again and again, when he heard the exclamations of his wife becoming most violent, drew off the attention both of Charles and the lady's maid, by engaging them with some passing remark, and in addition to this means of withdrawing their

regard he so far moved his own position, as to interpose his person between their's and that of Lady Coxcomb.

Charles saw these efforts, and willingly furthered them, so long as they appeared to spring from a proper and honourable motive, not only by answering Sir Henry's remarks in such a way as to show that his own attention was diverted, but also in a form and manner that attracted the ears of the listening servant, who unaccustomed, like Charles, to observe any such mood in her overbearing mistress, wanted our hero's intuitive good breeding to forego her own indulgence in its exhibition. In spite, however, of Charles' amiable efforts and intention, even his regard was suddenly and irresistibly attracted towards the wailings of the unhappy woman, by hearing her suddenly cry out, in a voice that resembled more than any thing else, the utterance of a partially suppressed scream, or the mournings of one of those who are said to have been possessed of devils,—

"O God, this murder finds me out at last!" Involuntarily Charles, in the midst of making

some remark himself, felt his blood curdle to his heart's core, as he heard these words of fearful import; still his own noble and chivalrous feelings led him to pity, even while he condemned the guilty, and little thinking to whom these expressions had reference, he purposely forbore to distress with his own gaze, one whose clouded heart was thus laid bare by the terrific retribution of the Almighty; nor was this slight act of true generosity unrewarded. He had stedfastly maintained his looks on Sir Henry Coxcomb, not expecting in this quarter, to observe any thing beyond that sympathy which would have been natural in any husband, however innocent, but as Lady Coxcomb's agonized words rose upon the air, so deadly a change came over the aspect of Sir Henry, that our hero was staggered to believe the evidence of his eyesight. Young as he was in the world, there is something in the front of guilt, that seems to lie patent even to the most inexperienced eye. Charles, we know, had often, on board the Tartar, heard divers hints of tales and stories,

which he had deemed too perilous even to contemplate, much less to repeat. These had awakened his suspicions. He was too guiltless himself to know what the pangs of remorse really are, and far too generous to allow his mind to be biassed by an ill-natured slander of one who had behaved both liberally and gratefully to himself; still duty led him to be vigilantly awake to all that might be passing around him, and quite alive to the necessity of taking every means that should come under his eye, of deciding what were the real characters both of Sir Henry and his wife. In one brief second, little as Charles wished or expected, nay more, much as he would have reprobated, such an intention, our hero's estimate of Sir Henry's character was fixed for ever. In that one look he saw, and grieved most bitterly, as he acknowledged it, that Sir Henry had scarcely been belied by rumour, and that whatever the amount of his crime might be, — this was indeniable, he was a man of guilt, and, as Charles feared, guilt of the deepest dye. Involuntarily his soul seemed to sink within him,

as he contemplated the possibility, that he might even then be talking to a cold, deliberate, calculating murderer; and yet, if this were not a crime to be laid to his charge, why should the mere utterance of that fearful word on the frenzied lips of another, thus momentarily unman him; moreover, with lightning quickness, there rushed to the confirmation of these horrible suspicions, the long previous knowledge of Lady Coxcomb's character, and the certainty that nothing short of the most dreadful and overwhelming remorse could have crushed her unbending spirit to the earth.

Mankind have a frequent habit of complaining of that short-sightedness, which does not enable them to possess to-day the knowledge that lies doomed to reach them on the morrow. Like the great majority of man's complaints, the present, among a thousand other instances, will serve to show how little for our happiness, would such a knowledge prove. When Charles thus shrank at the bare thought of coming in contact with one who could

seriously be accused of the usually cowardly crime of murder, what would have been his feelings, could he have dived into the past, and have known what were the real particulars of that deed, which produced such bitter fruits of upbraiding and self-abasement?

When the words we have repeated struck on our hero's ear, thus wholly unsought by him, and were moreover tacitly corroborated by the fearful agitation of Sir Henry, Charles no longer considered it his duty to abstain from hearing; but, on the contrary, felt himself bound, both as a member of society, and as a single being, to receive every evidence as to the true nature of those with whom he was acting. Without allowing it therefore to be seen from any outward looks, he now gave his whole attention to Lady Coxcomb's words, and forebore all further share in any conversation that might in the least degree drown her utterance. This silence he naturally expected would excite Sir Henry's anger, but the latter appeared so engrossed by the terrific disclosures his wife was making, that he seemed to give little heed, not

only to what was said by others, but even to what fell from his own lips. After changing his position several times, and making numerous abortive efforts to check her revelations, the Baronet laid his hand upon the shoulder of his agonized wife, and bending his lips close to her ear, by some vehement but inaudible remonstrance reduced her to a temporary silence. This however did not continue long, for as the savages proceeded in the work of preparation, the same train of thoughts appeared once more to be awakened in her mind. Again broke forth those dreadful self-criminations, which it happily seems the province of heavy guilt to publish in person to the world, in a great majority of those cases where no other testimony exists against them. Amongst other exclamations thus heard, the word murder was frequently repeated, with various other condemnatory phrases, that went to the purport of explaining.

"Was it all to end in this?"—"Must the murdered blood fall on my child's head?"—"Why should the only guiltless one be selected

for the blow?"—"Can no expiation wash it out!"—"Think what our sufferings have been!"—"Merciful Heaven, what has proved our gain!"

These, and a variety of similar combinations of the same dreadful story, carried to the mind of Charles, some feeling which, if not an absolute conviction of his companion's guilt, was only moderated into a milder sentiment by our hero's own kindness, gratitude, and humility; but, though these emotions made him stop thus far short of utter condemnation, still much irretrievable mischief had undoubtedly been effected.

Once, and for ever, had flown that enduring respect which, supported by the want of any positive evidence of his own knowledge against Sir Henry, had triumphed over all the rumours, reports, and insinuations, with which the Tartar had been constantly rife, ever since the hour when Charles had first joined her. Again, how severe a blow was now received by that deep feeling of undoubted gratitude, which not all his suspicions could in the slightest degree

lessen! To feel himself indebted to people whom he could no longer, in the slightest degree, esteem, was indeed a hard stroke to so lofty and high-minded a character.

How bitterly also did he regret, not having followed the genuine impulses of his own heart in petitioning Admiral Roupell, to take him back to England. However, he had acted for the best, and even though fortune went against him, he reflected that the wisest of mankind are still doomed to be fallible, and that this was a consolation he was fully entitled to enjoy. Resolving to seize the first opportunity, if another should ever be permitted to him, of escaping all further connexion with those who had thrown so much suspicion on themselves, Charles turned away from Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb, and seating himself upon the sand, gave way to the depressing thoughts that crowded on his mind.

CHAPTER XII.

While the scene we have described in the last chapter was proceeding, Lady Coxcomb suddenly turned round to the stricken and horrified Charles, and grasping his hand with an earnestness of entreaty, that he could not resist feeling, even although he now suspected how dark was her real character,—she exclaimed, "And you! you too! who have so often risked your own life for the benefit of others, will you see my poor boy burned at the stake without a single effort to save him?" Then with the rapidly changing inconsistency, which more distinguishes madness than sanity, she suddenly directed her remarks to Sir Henry.

"Where is your boasted discipline now? you that used to pride yourself on the dominion over your fellows! Now where is the qualification

you have spent your whole life in acquiring—the command of men?—But no! I see that I was wrong!—the command of slaves I should have said! the only thing that such a spirit is fitted for! The command of men is the command of intellect, but yours was only the command of force! Now curse yourself and die! your strength is taken from you with the passing hour, by the men whom you goaded to madness, without having the ability to restrain the disease you created, and now by a mere handful of savages behold your wife insulted and enslaved, and your son and heir about to die a death more horrible than civilized life can bear to name."

At this juncture the mother's feelings seemed to get so completely the mastery over every prudential consideration that Lady Coxcomb tore her hair, and screamed aloud in the bitterness of her anguish, calling in the most frantic way on Heaven to take back the curse of life; then suddenly, as if the thought once more recurred to her, she turned round to Charles, and passionately clasping his arm, with all the true

tenderness and irresistible appeal of a woman in distress, continued—"But you, I know, can save him, if you will but try; I have seen you venture on far more fearful undertakings, and Heaven, that justly looks in scorn on such a guilty creature as myself, marks with success the undertakings of an unstained and upright mind like yours. In the name of that God then who has rewarded you for the cruel trials through which you have passed, do not tell me you cannot do it, I will not listen to the words: you have ingenuity, and a true sailor's endless invention:—only think for a moment, and I am sure you will hit on some plan to save a distracted mother from witnessing the most horrible murder of her child. Reflect for a moment that he has no one else left to assist him, when even his own father sits by without an effort for his rescue."

This last allusion Charles considered by no means the most politic or the most agreeable that it might have been in the speaker's power to produce, since it was quite clear that wounding Sir Henry through his (Charles') side was not the best

way in the world to maintain a good understanding between them. Had our hero, however, been a little more acquainted with the world, he would have known that this conduct was quite in accordance with the common law of married life. In the present instance, however, Sir Henry Coxcomb appeared not to give himself the slightest trouble on the point, for perhaps he felt much too deeply for either anger or jealousy. Without appearing to notice his wife's remarks any more than if they had never reached his ears, the unhappy man remained with his looks cast down upon the earth, his brow knit, and the blood slowly trickling from his wounded lip, on which his teeth were still as firmly fixed as if they had been set for ever. Thus rendered the object of so urgent an appeal, Charles naturally revolved in his own mind whether there really were not, as Lady Coxcomb had suggested, some channel still open to his ingenuity, by which it might be possible to rescue not only young Reginald, but all his fellow captives and sufferers from the more than horrible fate im-

pending over them. Lady Coxcomb was not slow to perceive how willing a friend she still possessed in our hero, and ceasing for a time those distressing outcries, which she appeared unable altogether to suppress, she allowed him an opportunity of considering whether anything really could be effected.

While with all his energies thus intensely excited, Charles gave himself up to the consideration of whether it was still possible to effect an escape, his eye, after wandering all round the open scene, as if to fasten upon the barest probability that might present itself, at last fixed upon the ocean, that great resource of all its children; in vain he strained his intense gaze in the wild hope that some friendly sail might appear: nothing that bore the faintest resemblance to a speck of canvass could however be seen, and after several minutes of fruitless rumination, the gazer was about to give up the question as wholly lost, when his glance was once more rivetted to the distant horizon, by beholding it gradually illu-

mined by the mild but glorious effulgence of the slowly rising moon.

With what an overwhelming and inexpressible magic did this sight now affect him! In an instant all his thoughts were wandering back to Devon, on whose lovely shores he had so often witnessed and worshipped the exquisite advent of the same mute enchantress. On the margin of the sea at Dawlish, hour after hour had he remained gazing at the touching spectacle, as this mild Suzeraine of the night slowly mounted to her throne, upon the arch of heaven. On the shores of Dawlish, beneath these thrilling beams he had passed the most ecstatic hour which life had hitherto afforded him; when eyes almost too brilliant to be gazed upon had shot into his soul a light that was to lead him either to the pinnacle of distinction, or to destruction's verge.

At the present moment, when every hope connected with this tender subject, seemed not only for ever lost, but even the remembrance of the past became a torture approaching

almost to madness, with what mingled emotions of transport and bitterness did he gaze on the scene before him.

Roused from the reverie into which he had fallen, by Lady Coxcomb once more imploring him to devise some scheme for her son's safety, the first difficulty that presented itself to Charles's view, was the separation of his own party. To communicate with them, and so form any plan of escape was next to impossible, yet without such concert what hope existed, that they should ever be able to effect any ulterior good?

Once more our hero's eyes wandered to the bright moon, and from this splendid object to the mournful contrast afforded by the helpless group of his bound and expiring shipmates, as they lay huddled together under the branches of a knot of tall stately trees, not unlike our pines.

"Surely, Sir Henry," said Charles, as the thought appeared to strike him, "if we were to pretend to be worshippers of the moon, these savages could never know the deceit we

should be palming off upon them nor be able to interpret one word of any communication, we might thus address to our shipmates, and so by shouting on our knees in a loud tone of voice, as if we were pouring forth supplications to our pretended Deity, we might arrange with them some plan for making our escape to-night. —The savages have still left the pinnace floating."

"To what end should we survive? even if we did manage to escape,—without food to eat, or strength to fight, we must ultimately fall a prey to these savages, and we may as well therefore undergo our fate at once, as postpone it by a vain and painful struggle."

"What! inhuman monster!"—commenced Lady Coxcomb, in one of those conciliatory strains, the extreme utility of which in carrying a point, we have all of us occasionally witnessed.—A supplicatory motion from Charles, however, luckily sufficed to induce her to be silent, after which Charles, in a different mode, replied to his superior, by observing,

"Your remark is only too correct, Sir Henry,

I fear, as to its ultimate truth, still perhaps you would not consider the habit of our profession, in never despairing, wrongly exercised here, in fighting off the evil hour to the last moment. Supposing that we were able, during the night, to carry off the savages' war canoe, and tow the pinnance after, or get off with the pinnace, having the canoe in tow, I cannot see that these wretches have any mode of overtaking us; the wind has risen freshly off shore. If it should be the pleasure of Heaven to favour our attempt, we might fall in with some sail, even though so much good fortune has never chanced to us hitherto."

"As to what might befall us, that is a field no one can explore," replied Sir Henry, with a forced and bitter smile. "It does not seem very likely that Heaven intends us much further favour now, unless it be a death at the stake, to furnish animal food for these savages, who seem to possess little else save dogs and fish: but be that as it may, you are young, if you wish to try and escape, and think there is

the slightest chance still left you, I will not baulk your inclination in trying it, though my own opinion of our case is fixed. As to making out to sea, we can do little or nothing by that; no—our better plan will be to coast round this land, which, as nearly as I can surmise, I take to be one of the islands of New Zealand. If we can find any little spot where we may fortify ourselves until our party can recruit, we may manage as Europeans, to make some short stand against these savages, though I hardly know how we are to exist."

"For that, Sir Henry, we had better take a hint from our captors; they seem able to exist upon roots and fish, and from the abundance of the latter, I have no doubt we shall be able to secure these in plenty, and for the rest, at any rate starvation would be better than seeing our shipmates roasted alive, and then devoured before our eyes."

Sir Henry passed his hand before his face, as if to conceal the agitation that shook him, as this horrible alternative was suggested, and

then after a moment's pause, he briefly added, —"You are right, it is our only chance, and we must make the best of it. See the moon's lower circle just rises above the waves, throw yourself on your knees towards the planet, and clasp your hands, as if in adoration of it. I will shout aloud the orders necessary for our attempt to-night, and you repeat them after me; thus our friends will have a greater chance of distinctly understanding what they are to do, and effect, while the ceremony will appear to the savages more like what it is intended to represent, and above all be sure that not the slightest smile appear upon your countenance; for if the savages once catch the least clue to guide their quick suspicions all will be lost. They will meet stratagem with trick, and by laying wait for us to-night, defeat all our plans. —It is quite evident they have prepared those stakes for to-morrow's torture, and therefore, I suppose since the sun has set, we may consider those poor fellows safe. Now, then, are you ready?"

"Quite ready, Sir!"

"Very well,"—and Sir Henry starting to his feet, and lifting his hands above his head, commenced shouting at the top of his voice, which was modulated, so as to have somewhat of a Cathedral chaunt in its tones, "Mr. Ferrett, ahoy!"

Poor Ferrett, who was too fast bound to raise himself from the ground, hereupon replied, with as loud a response as his weak state would permit, "Aye, aye, Sir."

"Ferrett," resumed Sir Henry, "we are pretending to worship the moon in order to deceive the savages. Your party, as far as they can, had better do the same, and thus we may contrive to plan an escape, without these accursed thieves gaining any opportunity of guessing what are our communications, and so interrupting them."

"Very good, Sir! we will follow your advice as far as we can, but most of us are so exceedingly weak, that we can scarcely lift a limb, and two of our party I think are quite dead;

your son, however, Sir Henry, bears these distresses as bravely as ever, if we could only get a little water, I, for one, should care nothing about our other woes."

"Bear up for a brief space longer, the heavy dew will begin to fall the moment the sun is fairly beneath the horizon, and though it only moistens your clothes, you will feel the benefit of it almost immediately."

Charles who had been keeping up a sort of ceremonial accompaniment to this conversation, observed Sir Henry shudder perceptibly when the name of his son was mentioned, while Lady Coxcomb, unable to restrain her feeling, even thus slightly, broke out into a warm exclamation of gratitude, and while the wondering natives, with a degree of awe and surprise, formed a semicircle at a considerable distance from the supposed worshippers, Sir Henry proceeded with his choral information, as fluently as if he himself had been furnished with a chaunting education in Westminster Abbey.

"The plan we propose to pursue," he re-

sumed, "is this. As soon as ever the savages are fairly asleep, we hope to succeed in stealing up to you, and helping to remove you down into the pinnace or canoe, after which we will take our chance, whether we cannot better ourselves by getting afloat."

"At any rate, Sir, we may as well be chopped to pieces in making the attempt, as lie here to be gridironed to-morrow morning, I make no sort of doubt that those dark skinned devils yonder, intend to grub the whole of us, if we should happen to be in their power by to-morrow morning."

"I fear it is more than probable, from what I have heard, and indeed, as far as I can make out, we have fallen upon one of the Islands of New Zealand, but do not be disheartened for all that; before you shall be touched, Mr. James and myself will both make a charge to your rescue, and if we cannot save, we will at least fall with you."

"I hope, Sir, you will not think any further of that; they can only roast us once, and provided they don't serve us up much underdone,

I dare say we shall lie pretty easy upon their stomachs. Ever since I quitted the old Tartar, I must say for my own part, I have felt as if I should be glad of a chance to lie easy any where, though it was even in the maw of a New Zealander's gizzard, but I am afraid, Sir Henry, if you cannot manage to bring with you, one of these unnatural vagabond's calabashes full of fresh water, there will be very few of us able to make so much head way even as to reach the pinnace."

"Don't despair on that account; you know that a trifle does not deter Mr. James here; and he, and myself, will both do our utmost to save you, only keep your hopes up as much as you can, and lie with your mouths towards the sky to catch the dew. The moon has now risen. I see, three or four times her own breadth above the horizon, we will, therefore, say no more at present, for fear of exciting the suspicions of the savages: so just join in the howl, which you hear me set up, and the fortune of war attend us; Mr. James, look out to do the same."

Having given these instructions, Sir Henry threw himself forward at full length along the yellow sand, towards the Queen of night, whose rites he had been feigning to observe, when in a few seconds, shore and hill pealed to a screech so discordantly powerful, that the very savages seemed touched with the propriety of this devotion.

CHAPTER XIII.

As it had proved, no other device, within their power to execute, could have proved half so serviceable to the forlorn hopes of our party as that which the ingenuity of Charles had devised.

At first, some of the inferior chiefs, when they heard Sir Henry's shouts so instantaneously answered from the hill-side, were for making forward with their most persuasive clubs, and silencing the Baronet, who was already by far the least favoured of the four preserved ones, so intuitive and universal a guide is physiognomy, wherever nature, and not interest is the judge to whom the appeal is made. As soon, however, as the Captain's palms were extended towards that golden and glorious orb, whose trembling rays were beginning to glance along the world of waters, the two heads of

the tribe,—venerable chieftains with as many tattoes upon their cheeks, as stars adorn the milky way,—at once interposed their authority, and not only restrained the would-be intrusionists, but themselves drew back in a seeming state of devotion and respect, and restraining the rest of the crowding copper coloured inquirers, until they formed a large semicircle, continued to witness, in respect and silence, the devotions, as they evidently thought, of their wretched prisoners.

When Sir Henry and his friends had finally ceased the grand concluding howl of their service, the four eldest leaders, making a sign to their followers, and giving them some brief orders, as if to prevent them from breaking off the circle of observation already formed, stepped to the Baronet with a manner approaching almost to timidity; and the senior savage pointing to the moon, put what was supposed to be a question, in one of those soft dialects which are generally spoken by grindstones much in want of oil, and other equally soft toned conversationists. As Sir Henry could only imagine the

nature of the query, he turned towards the new mistress of his adoration, and placing both palms on his head, made a most reverential salaam towards her; with this the pagan appeared fully satisfied, and having made a long oration to his expectant tribe, they broke up the listening circle, and dispersing in knots, proceeded to light small fires, and cook their supper. This consisted chiefly of fish. The chiefs indulged in a roasted cur or two, and after an interval which had satisfied the hunger of the tribe, brought the broiled head and fore paws of a small dog to our party.

Anxious to see if they could induce their inhuman captors to migitate the frightful rigour of their treatment to their shipmates on the hill, it was agreed between Sir Henry and Charles, that they should one and all refuse any sustenance, until their companions were fed, or at least supplied with water.

This line of conduct, as far as signs sufficed, our party did pursue, but it was all in vain. Again and again, the savages proffered them food, and as often did Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb,

Charles and the waiting maid, point up to the knoll occupied by Ferrett and the others, but these requisitions were only met with severe and threatening looks, and the food at last angrily withdrawn.

"I fear we must give it up as hopeless, Mr. James," said Sir Henry; "these unfeeling hounds are neither to be led nor driven; what would I now give for half a dozen muskets with as many bayonets at their muzzles! If there breathed alive a single savage of the whole lot within twelve minutes, he should be at liberty to eat my heart out; and I would spare him the trouble even of cooking it!"

Charles looked at Sir Henry's face as he uttered this wish, and thought how idle after all was the New Zealander's paint and tattooing, compared with that innate ferocity of soul, which lights the eye, and fires the fierce visage of one really possessed of a vindictive and bloody mind. All our hero's suspicions recurred to him, with redoubled force, as he gazed on the spectacle that countenance presented, with its dark small, fire gleam-

ing eye, haggard features, and bleeding lip. An almost unaccountable shudder passed over him, and his own glance involuntarily sought the ground.

Even amidst all the dreadful agony of that time, when Charles felt that the hopes, dreams, and affections of a whole life were crushed, even amid the treble agony of a soul conscious of possessing the warmest and most generous impulses, yet knowing itself doomed to a life of the most repugnant slavery, and heart-breaking disappointment, it was no inconsiderable aggravation to his ills, to feel that the last lingering of respect for his patron and commander had all but vanished. That the stung and tortured bosom of the man, to whom it was equally his duty and his wish to look, contained some fearful secret, the revelation of which, would stamp him as among the most deservedly infamous and dishonoured of mankind.

From the deep despondency occasioned by these thoughts, and the sad pressure which they occasioned, he would, but for the beloved image of Siberia, most joyfully have taken refuge in the

repose of death. This dark image was however effectually driven from our hero's mind, by the appearance of the lady's maid.

In the eye of this damsel the once admired form of Charles had not only resumed all its former pleasantness, but even gained fresh charms, which few women can, and none ought to resist even if they could. We mean, the power that is acquired by constant kindness and those gentle attentions which as they approach the nearest to her own exquisite softness, naturally point out the possessor as the most fit friend and companion of her own less powerful nature; more especially when such mildness in manner is confessedly united to a heart capable of prompting the most daring deeds in the hour of danger; we say nothing of these powerful qualities being enhanced by a high sense of honour, marked generosity and an able mind, because such a combination of virtues has been rarely found apart from these adjunctive graces, since Sidney's time till now, and all these attractions existed in Charles's case to a full extent.

As long as affairs went smoothly and the naval world smiled upon the pretty soubrette, Charles, as we have seen, infinitely to her disgust, would not allow a single thought to wander from his due devotion to the matchless Siberia, but when the hour of danger, sorrow and privation arrived—when the natural selfishness of our weak nature showed itself in its most disgusting form, and every one adrift in the pinnace, seemed to acknowledge the propriety of the old sea maxim, "every one for himself and God for us all," Charles's character came out in strong relief against those of all around. The lady's maid had confidently taken her place in the pinnace, convinced that she was intrusting the sovereignty of her charms to the support of the most loyal and inalienable subjects. Alas! who shall limit the extent of human disappointment? The few first days and nights of exposure to the rough breezes of ocean, gave, it is true, to the cheek of the soubrette a transparency and colour that, if anything, heightened her charms. Next to my Lady Coxcomb, and

in secret, as she flattered herself, somewhat before her Ladyship, if the officers had dared to show such a preference, came in the sway of her charms. Pleased with the position, and her vanity fully flattered by the consequent attention which she received, she thought nothing of the danger, nor scarcely felt the privation of anything—but a looking-glass! Even with this, she was kind enough under the circumstances to dispense: she soon found, however, that there was rain in the clouds for her, and that the day was not always to prove quite as fine as she had anticipated. With wonderful rapidity to her mind, there came over the crew of the pinnace, a most perplexing shortness of water;—she would scarcely have been much more disturbed by a shortness of breath. She thought it rather ungallant too, that Lady Coxcomb and herself should be put upon an allowance, even though it gave to herself half as much again as that allowed to any officer or man in the boat, and to Lady Coxcomb a quantity still larger by one third; day by day, as land seemed far off as ever, and

their supplies gradually grew less, this extra allowance was pared down, until at last that old Spinster Misfortune, so completely abolished all distinctions either of rank or sex that neither Lady Coxcomb nor her maid were allowed one drop more than any other person in the boat. It would have been well for her, if affairs had rested here, but as the necessity grew more urgent, it was discovered that women ought to do with less than men, because they were not called upon to use an oar; to keep watch; nor to perform any other duty: and thus by degrees Lady Coxcomb, and her maid, were reduced to one half the allowance of the others. Her ladyship was either too proud to complain, or else from a spare habit of body, did not feel the privation, or else perhaps prudently remembered that her popularity with either officers or men, had never been of that overwhelming nature likely to support her in such an emergency. None of these considerations, however, appeared to weigh in the mind of the soubrette. She denounced loudly — the want of gallantry, and was told to—hold her tongue. She argued

against the impropriety of such a regulation, and was met by the rather unanswerable reply, that if she did not like the rules of the boat, she was at liberty to leave it. She now pouted, but nobody took any notice of her, and left to her despair, she relieved her afflicted heart by that remedy which few surpass, an unaffected silent flood of tears. To this she was moved, we must admit by feelings somewhat more cogent than mere temporary privation, since, as she listened to the gloomy fears, the unconcealed forebodings, as to the gradually darkened prospect round her, and watched, moreover, the increasing fierceness, and horrible selfishness that every day's want developed with fresh force, then gradually grew upon her mind, a perfect conviction that they were rapidly approaching that stage of maddened want, at which, in the absence of turtle or venison, men condescend to dine off one another.

Now she had an intuitive perception of the fact, that no hungry boat's crew, bearing in mind, the constant and constitutional preference of the sex, so habitual to sailors,—no hungry

boat's crew thus circumstanced, would ever contemplate for an instant, munching up a rough hairy shipmate, while there was a tender delicate young lady's maid close at hand for the occasion. Lady Coxcomb, in this matter she felt convinced would be posponed to herself, even if her ladyship had not a fair chance of escape altogether, and here the soubrette gave a sort of envious glance at Lady Coxcomb, to examine if she really did look so old and tough as to be quite safe in this emergency. Alas! for those formidable wrinkles in the forehead!—the poor lady's maid felt convinced there was not a single starveling on board, that would hesitate for a moment between them. She never felt inclined to envy wrinkles before, but certainly would have given a trifle for the possession of a few formidable ones at this moment. It was little to be wondered at, that with these impressions on her mind, the lady's maid should give way to tears, on seeing which, Charles, who could not imagine that they had any deeper source than some mere passing emotion of strong thirst, and never at any time

had been able to screw his feelings to that pitch of stoicism, which can see a woman in distress, without doubly feeling every pang that assails her, immediately tendered to the parched lips of the sobbing girl, that water which had now become so much more precious than gold to all on board. To the surprise of our hero, as well as of several others, who witnessed the act, the weeping complainant gently, but firmly refused the gift, and continued to cry on; but, this last proceeding was only for a brief space. Surprise would have dried her tears, even if no other emotion had tended towards the same point. Our reader already knows that pique, at the seemingly unaccountable coolness of our hero, had induced the lady's maid to show off, whenever an opportunity was permitted to her, the whole artillery of her airs and graces. At this moment, however, if there was one individual in the boat, from whose hand unexpected kindness, would have come with double strength, that individual was our hero. With all a woman's quickness, she at once saw that the coolness of Charles had been owing to

no want of a due appreciation of her charms; but some other hitherto hidden cause, which now flashed upon her mind with all the quickness and certainty of light. She was not slow either in duly appreciating that delicacy which could make up by redoubled attention in adversity, for any neglect that might have been shown in prosperity. With all her vanity, as indeed will often happen, she was a good-hearted little thing, and would have prized most highly at that moment, an opportunity of expressing—not only the thanks which she felt to be our hero's due, but the contrition which she experienced, for having so frequently sinned against him in times past. Such an opportunity, however much it might be desired, could not be gained, she was, therefore, obliged to content herself with one of those mute pressures of the hand, which, as some of our readers may be aware, often convey more than many a long speech. If that be so, though we ourselves do not possess any competence to give an opinion on such a delicate point, the lady's maid's wish, was all but satisfied; this,

at any rate we can answer for, namely, that all her penchant in the direction of our hero, sprung up once more, with wonderful rapidity, and by the time they gained the inhospitable land, where all were made prisoners, Charles, without having deviated in the slightest degree from the fealty due to his liege lady, was esteemed, and deservedly so, as one in a thousand, by the second lady of the party. This consideration he had won, more by the simple act of consoling her numerous fears, than any more positive demonstration of regard, which on her part he had either never observed, or resolutely closed his eyes against seeing.

Thus then it was that, on the present occasion, when in obedience to Sir Henry, she had refused the proffered food of the savages, she perceiving that she was taken at her word—not at all times a position exceedingly relished by the fair sex—and feeling, moreover, that she was giving up a benefit exceedingly necessary to herself, without its producing the slightest mitigation in the sufferings of those, who to say the least of it, she did not hold to have shewn all the con-

sideration due to her sex in the boat,—now determined to make an effort towards regaining that aforesaid piece of roasted dog, which, if it did not speedily fall to her share, as by the savages originally intended, would, she very very plainly perceived, become appropriated by the boundless appetites of some of the inferior squaws of the tribe. Having taken Charles's opinion on this point, and obtained his leave to act, a permission he could scarcely give for laughing, the damsel in question coolly advanced from the position occupied by Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb, up to the side of the chieftain, who had done her the honour to make a selection of herself. This specimen of the antique, flattered, as all elderly gentlemen are, of whatever tribe or nation, by the advances of a young and pretty woman, extended his dark and withered paw, to caress the head of his new and European bride, for to such a doom no doubt he had destined her, when she, with that degree of freedom, which young brides are not slow to acquire, coolly lifted the portion of roast dog, fish, &c., which

she had before rejected, and was about to carry off the whole without taking any notice of her proprietor's caress.

In an instant the old fellow's iron clutches were deeply fixed in her soft arm, and his dark scowling eyes directed upon her countenance, in a manner that at once vouched for the difference between the treatment of women among savage nations, and the deference paid to them by the most enlightened of mankind. The manner of the soubrette, however, quickly changed to meet the emergency. Looking up in the old wretch's face, with one of the sweetest smiles in her possession—a smile that asked permission and forgiveness, as plainly as language could have demanded them, she appeared to wait his pleasure. The old fellow acknowledged the attention with a nod, and she was at once allowed to abstract the desired viands. On bringing these to Lady Coxcomb, Sir Henry, imagining that if he did not volunteer his leave, it might possibly be dispensed with, took the wiser step of preventing such an encroachment on his favourite hobby of discipline,

by the simple act of eating the first mouthful himself, remarking as he did so,

"Since there is no longer any hope that our holding out can produce the slightest benefit to the others, we may as well fortify ourselves while we can, for the fatigue of to-night's escape." This advice was considered in every way unexceptionable, and was, therefore, followed with that readiness with which we generally accede to suggestions wherein our own heart's devices are embodied.

As the sun had long since set, the savages held a sort of peace council, over their fires, and after binding the four captives in a manner more secure than pleasant, they retired to their rude apologies for huts to sleep; with the exception of the two junior chiefs of the four, who remained to keep watch over the prisoners.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The sooner we pretend to be asleep ourselves, the sooner we may fairly suppose these fellows will slumber on their posts; therefore, without any unnecessary loss of time, Mr. James, do you pretend to snore, and I will do the same," said Sir Henry, addressing Charles, soon after their guards had taken up their post.

"Why the only thing against this arrangement, Sir Henry, that I can see, is the fact of my being so thoroughly worn out and tired, that in pretending to snore, I am afraid I shall fall into a deep slumber in earnest."

"You need not be frightened at that; I shall be sure not to go to sleep myself, and as soon as I see these fellows safely locked, I will

give you a call, quite in time for you to do all that I require. Only take care that when you wake up, you do it in so quiet a manner as not to disturb either of these fellows. Their sense of hearing is very acute, and the least thing will alarm them; on avoiding which, all our safety depends. A few hours sound sleep, will do your young strength a service, and enable you to promote the escape all the better.

"Thank you, Sir," replied Charles,—and instantly turning on his side, he was soon lost in profound repose.

By some species of legerdemain, of course we are wholly unable to account for it, but it did so happen, that within half an hour of Charles's slumbering, the lady's maid, who also fell asleep, contrived to get her head, though it must have been a mere accident, securely pillowed upon Charles's broad, soft shoulder. The night was slowly waning into morning, and the hour might be slightly past two o'clock, when our hero was aroused by the gentle, but firm pressure of Sir Henry's hand upon his person. With the caution that had

been left upon his mind the last thing before sleeping, Charles uttered not a word until fairly awake, and listening to Sir Henry at his elbow, quietly extricated himself from the head of the lady's maid, and sliding this upon the prostrate form of Lady Coxcomb, whom he took to be asleep,—a change that neither of them would have particularly admired,—he now silently, but most effectively applied his young sharp teeth to Sir Henry's bands, which being made of bark, speedily gave way, and left the gallant Baronet at liberty. Sir Henry, in turn, cast loose Charles's lashings; and the latter, then stood up ready to receive Sir Henry's instructions.

"Now, my boy," said the latter, in a whisper, "do you take this fellow nearest to you, and I will go round and take the other, who is the youngest and the stoutest."

"But, Sir Henry," returned our hero, retaining his commander by the arm, "pray give me some more minute instructions; what do you mean by *taking* him? What am I to do with him, when I have got him?"

"Do with him?" repeated Sir Henry, with an incredulous look, while an expression of singular meaning played round his mouth as he uttered the words, "What do you think?"

"Bind him, Sir?" said our hero.

"Bind the devil!" contemptuously replied Sir Henry.

"No, Sir, I forgot; perhaps I had better gag him."

"A better plan still, truly; is there nothing else you can devise to rouse this brood of vipers, and insure the destruction of my son and all your other shipmates?"

"I fear, Sir Henry, I do not understand you," answered Charles, speaking in the same low key that the other had hitherto used, yet at the same time wholly unable to keep his heart from throbbing most tumultuously beneath the influence of some powerful emotion, to which hitherto it had been happily a stranger.

"Do you not understand what is your duty, Sir?" enquired Sir Henry, now using one of

those icy tones which Charles knew to bode so much of evil to the hearer; which he had never yet heard addressed to himself since that memorable day when he stood bared at the gangway, and which since then he had always hoped and trusted never to hear again. Here, however, he was disappointed; and before he could recover from the panic into which these ominous words had thrown him, the question was repeated.

"Do you not know your duty, Sir?"

"Yes, Sir Henry! to obey you!"

"Good! and I order you," pointing to the man nearest him, "to put that savage to death, without allowing him time for the utterance of a single sound."

"What! Sir Henry, in his sleep?"

"Yes, Sir, in his sleep! Ask me no further questions!"

"But, Sir Henry, this is the man who only a few hours since spared my life!"

"It was for no kindness to you, but for his own convenience; had he spared you fifty times,

it is now your duty to take his. You have a pen-knife, and there lies his throat: be quick!"

And Sir Henry, considering this was warrant sufficient for the execution of every savage beyond the pale of Christendom, was already moving off to execute his share of the frightful task.

"Stay, Sir Henry; stay, I implore you," repeated Charles, strung up to dreadful energy, "you know it is not a little that should deter me from executing your slightest wish, even at the expense of my own life; but you have laid a command upon me too heavy for my weakness to bear; I cannot take away the existence of a benefactor in his sleep, even though he be a savage! Let me but awake him, that he may have fair play, and I swear to you, unarmed as I am, I will lose my own being or take his!"

"Young fool!" sternly replied the other, "do you not see you are trembling at a shade? If he is to die, what can it avail him whether he die asleep or awake? But *you* are among

the youngest and strongest of the party, and your continuing amongst us is an ingredient necessary to our success. What makes you think you are at liberty to dispose of yourself for the satisfaction of a mere punctilio? Do as I order you, Sir, this instant, and think no more of such a wretch than if he were a mad dog; already you have lost too much time by this folly: presently our whispering will be heard, and then all is irretrievably lost."

Once more Sir Henry made an effort to move away, and once more our hero clung to him as if his own life and not that of another were at stake.

"It is in vain to expect it of me, Sir Henry; I cannot do it. I have a repugnance to such a deed, which no temptation on earth can induce me to overcome."

"What, Sir, do you dare refuse my orders?"

"While they are such as man can execute without offence against his Maker, at no hand shall they find more prompt obedience than at mine. Beyond this point I must not, and I cannot go."

"By the Heaven above us, if you dare for another instant to hesitate at blindly following the order I have given you, as surely as ever we live to return to Europe I will break you by sentence of a Court-martial, and put for ever upon your name the titles of traitor and of coward!"

"As for the sentence of a Court-martial, Sir Henry, I must meet it as I best may; angry as you are, I had thought you too just in truth and honour to lavish upon me the language you now use. Such appellations, when deserved, are worse indeed than death; but my own conscience will acquit me of deserving them: while for the world I can calmly meet any title that it may be pleased to fix upon my name, provided only that my own deeds never give it the slightest hold to say that I repaid obligation and confidence with death, or justly to style me MURDERER."

At the moment this was uttered, in the same and almost inaudible key that had regulated all their previous conversation, the moon was fast descending behind the high mountain that

overlooked the plain inland; the light therefore that it threw on the face of both the speakers was sufficiently indistinct; but pale and ineffectual as the moon's rays might be deemed for detecting the passions of the human breast, as they moved the human countenance, they were at any rate sufficient to reveal to Charles's gaze the features of Sir Henry, not only more awfully transported with fury than he had ever known them to be before, but actually more hideous in their demoniac expression than Charles had believed it possible for that countenance to prove.

Well did he remember his aspect at the moment that Sir Henry falsely imagined his son to have been slain by Charles's act; but then, amid all the ungovernable tempest of the passions, there was nothing of the base, culprit, hang-dog look, speaking not only of the wish to work evil but the consciousness of being cursed with its shame, that now beamed forth in every lineament of Sir Henry.

For some moments the Baronet's eyes rolled so wildly, his breath went and came so quickly,

such an agony of shame, remorse, and a thousand other hateful combinations of passion seemed to agitate and convulse him, that Charles at first expected to see him fall at his feet in a fit. Now flashed upon our hero's mind the full onus which his hasty words had unintentionally brought upon his shoulders. This tempest in Sir Henry's breast had been aroused by the accidental use of the term murderer, and all the suspicions which a series of circumstances had engendered, received a confirmation stronger than any that had hitherto arisen.

Bitterly now did Charles regret the precipitancy and want of thought that had so laid him open. He saw at a glance that Sir Henry was his foe for life. The benefit of all his past struggles and dangers he had swept away by one foolish word. But in the depth of his melancholy he felt that as he could not recal his error,—so to regret it was idle. What he had uttered was true and honest; and if he must fall in its maintenance, the cause was not without consolation adequate to the misfortune.

By degrees Sir Henry regained sufficient mastery over himself to reply; and though he seemed to gasp at every syllable, he once more returned to the charge.

"Will you do as I order you, and take his life?"

"It is not mine to take; and if it were, I dare not strike a benefactor. I could not slay a sleeping foe. I cannot give you that which does not belong to me. But you are welcome to my own." And Charles, quietly loosening the collar of his dress, laid bare before the ungovernable rage of Sir Henry his own slight throat, where the life-bearing carotid was palpitating plainly in the moonlight.

The firm and resolute opposition of high principle was an obstacle that Sir Henry could not understand. It seemed to incense him into actual insanity. For some brief space he remained gazing on the unguarded person of Charles, thus exposed with such foolish generosity: His wild eye-balls rolling till our hero could actually see, or fancy he saw, the fire glancing from them, while his nostrils were

distended like those of a blood-horse; his face was divested of every particle of colour, and small dots of gore gradually trickled from his gnawed lip. As Charles boldly met his eye, glance for glance, he saw the demon stand confessed before him; and for a second almost repented that he had thus wantonly placed his existence at the forbearance of one to whose breast the soft emotion of mercy was a stranger. Still he had done so: and had he to lose his life a thousand times, he would not quail nor blench the slightest muscle; and thus they stood front to front, and face to face. Suddenly Sir Henry raised his right hand, in which gleamed the small but fatal weapon it contained, and made a deliberate and deadly thrust right for the beating artery—

—Charles beheld the fearful blow coming, but not the thousandth part of an inch did any fibre of his body move to avert the death approaching. In another instant the thirsty sand would have drunk up the life-blood of one of the bravest hearts that ever bounded in human bosom,—when a small white hand was inter-

vened, the slightest motion was made against Sir Henry's arm, and the deadly-meant blow passed innocently by the point of life, idly exhausting its assassin-like fury over the left shoulder of our hero on the vacant air, slightly wounding as it passed the skin of Charles's neck.

Quite as fully satisfied of Sir Henry's diabolical malice as if his blow had taken all the effect he had intended, our hero now moved calmly on one side and felt for his own knife, determined that since his commander had missed the chance he had given him, he should for the future win all those to come, at the sword's point. This preliminary being settled, he also had the curiosity to look up and see who it was that had interfered to preserve him.

Greatly to his astonishment he now perceived that Lady Coxcomb had risen, and unseen by the excited whisperers, overheard their quarrel, and was interposing her authority to quiet Sir Henry. As may naturally be supposed, he felt considerable gratitude for her late act, even though he had not the utmost respect for every

portion of her character that had recently come to his knowledge. His gratitude might perhaps have been altered, had he been able to distinguish the words which she now poured into the tortured ear of Sir Henry; while she was obliged absolutely to detain him by the arm to induce him to hear her to an end.

"Still," pursued her Ladyship, "mine is after all the only wise plan to pursue. I know he has too much of our secret to be allowed to live quietly; and too little to be depended upon as a confidante. Indeed, in either capacity he is not in any way adapted to our ends; still, spare him now for our own sakes; wait till our son is saved. We have him in our power at any moment,—but let him serve our purpose first, and then like any other worthless tool be cast aside."

"Be it so, then," replied Sir Henry; "perhaps it is better.—Now, step aside for a few minutes."

"I will; first let me remove this fragment of my bonds; I slipped my hand through the other."

As Lady Coxcomb said this, she held up her left arm, to which was still attached the fragment of bark binding. A touch of Sir Henry's knife, soon freed his amiable helpmate from this fetter, and turning her back upon the waking and sleeping, she with a noiseless step moved gently down towards the sea, and seating herself upon the beach, looked up at the moon, now fast subsiding behind the hills.

Could human being—and that human being a woman, reared among the gentlenesses of European life,—face Heaven's pure light, while her own heart was obscured by the knowledge of such deeds, as were even at that moment of time in actual perpetration behind Lady Coxcomb? It does in truth seem almost a libel upon nature to deem such things possible, but so they were, and in the virtual as in the real world, how should we rightly form an estimate of beauty, if deformity did not exist close at hand to guide our minds by its hideous contrast? Even Charles, all fearless as he was where his own life was compromised,—even he

sickened at the horrible tragedy it was his doom now to see enacted before his startled eye.

The two savage chiefs lay still, either sleeping so deeply that they heard nothing of the discussion passing so near them, or else, with the wily cunning of their natures, cognisant of the loosening of their captives, and lying in ambush to detect their further plans; if this last suspicion was the correct one, they were unfortunate in their choice, for Sir Henry, stealing gently up to the side of the first, knelt down, and appeared prying into his ear; Charles heard a noise something like the faintest beginning, of a cry, and saw his superior officer thrust his hand upon the miserable creature's mouth, a slight gurgling was then heard for some seconds, as of a flowing liquid, and the vampire of the night moved on to his other victim. The same sounds ensued:—and before Charles had recovered from the ague-fit of horror that passed over him, he beheld, lying before him dead and motionless, the corses of two creatures who not a minute since, possessed as full an enjoyment of life and being as himself, while

Sir Henry, with his face and clothes dripping with blood, passed close to him, whispering hoarsely as he went, "Now, Sir, to the boat."

While the Baronet and his wife led the way towards the shore, the deserted lady's maid was still slumbering near the murdered men. Though it was no pleasant matter, to run any risk of being found in such a position, by the savage companions of the dead, Charles could not leave the poor girl to encounter such a fate, though Sir Henry and Lady Coxcomb did. Using the utmost precaution in his power, our hero gently broke upon her repose, placing his hand lightly over her mouth, as she awoke, and standing betwixt her and the ghastly sight which dawning day would soon render sufficiently clear to appal most beholders. Happily these precautions were followed with success, the girl was awakened without the least disturbance, and Charles hurrying down to the boat, placed her beside Lady Coxcomb.

Sir Henry had already started off to bring down his son, and loosen his companions; but

remembering that they were perishing from thirst, he returned once more to the pinnace. It was evident, that he felt considerable reluctance to visit the scene of his handiwork, so Charles at once volunteered the perilous task of seeking out, and fetching the desired supplies.

It was easier to undertake, than to accomplish such a mission, and only after a tedious and most apprehensive search, our hero found what he sought, and bore off to the group of trees two large calabashes full of the limpid element. To those who have never known the excruciating agony of prolonged thirst, it would seem ridiculous to describe the transports of rapture, with which the water was received. Both Sir Henry, and Charles, had great difficulty in persuading the exhausted men to be guarded in their exclamations. Pain and privation had so maddened them they were scarcely conscious of their own actions, each clamouring, and complaining, and calling for attention, that no one had power to afford. It was soon evident, both to our hero,

and the Baronet, that this conduct must end in the discovery, and recapture of all.—Straining his utmost authority to preserve silence and discipline, Sir Henry took his poor patient son within his arms, and hurried with him down to the sea, previously ordering Charles to bear on his back the third Lieutenant, who could not walk, and enjoining Ferret to preserve order and prevent noise till his return, when he would assist to carry off some more of those who were too weak to escape by themselves. The rest hobbled down to the water in the best way that they could.

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE all parties were thus engrossed in saving themselves, from the horrors of the faggot and the stake, day almost unnoticed slowly dawned upon them. Four of their late companions lay cold and insensible to the sufferings of the hour, beneath the trees, where they had been bound. Their sorrows were over. A long straggling file of five or six poor wretches were yet creeping towards the pinnace, eyeing its eagerly desired refuge with all the intensity of such a situation, when a loud and sudden yell of the most startling description, announced the discovery of their flight by the savages, and the consequent revelation of the questionable deed, by which it had been accompanied.

As if by the magic charms of ancient leeches, the ills and wounds of many of the lingerers appeared to receive a sudden cure from this terrific remedy, and those who before scarcely seemed able to put one foot before the other, now bounded forward towards the boat, as if in the whole course of their lives they had never known an ailment.

At first, it did not appear that the savages had seen our friends escaping, but that their outcry had been raised solely over their dead. They were not long, however, in directing their attention to the pinnace. The first notice of their regard was conveyed in a cloud of arrows, which scarcely left a single European untouched, and this preliminary being delivered, and the whole of the men having assembled, they made a general rush, with their clubs and spears, towards the sea. By this time only two of the most exhausted English stragglers were left on shore, making their slow and painful approach to their shipmates, uttering the most imploring appeals for aid and assistance, and with every mark of terror, discernible by the

faint light in their woe-stricken features.—These appeals, however, who could effectually answer, when all were so enfeebled by want and suffering? In the shortest space of time, the foremost savages came up with the rear-most Englishman, and though the latter swiftly dropped upon his knees, to ask for mercy, in less than one minute a dozen rude spear-heads, were glancing through his body.

Involuntarily, as it were, the other fugitive turned his head, and witnessed this horrid fate, and then with arms extended towards his friends for succour, endeavoured once more to quicken his pace.—In this respect, however, his efforts seemed to produce little good,—for though scarcely twenty yards from the desired goal, the foot-step of the avenger was close behind him. In such an extremity, Charles, always ready to sacrifice his own safety for the good of others, dashed from the bow of the pinnace, shot up to the lame and endangered man, who was no other than his old Lieutenant of the watch, who had committed such a blunder with respect to the barometer—and got him, with

singular strength and dexterity, fairly on his back;—when Lady Coxcomb, whispering a word in the ear of Sir Henry, attracted his attention to the double peril in which Charles had placed himself.

"Shove off! shove off! shove off! the pinnace! this instant! Since he dared to leave the boat without orders, leave him to his fate," shouted the Baronet,—not sorry, now that his son's safety was, as he thought gained, to see Charles's blood spilt in so open a manner. The officer to whom the task of playing into an assassin's hand was thus consigned, pretended to be unable, immediately to comply with the order; for in the navy, nothing procures such undoubted love and admiration, as the fearless exhibition of courage and daring, more especially when allied to a disposition so gentle, that the party praised seems the last to be conscious of excellence. Not a man on board, save Sir Henry, but would have deemed Charles's death the most unwelcome sight that could have met their eyes. The Baronet himself guessed something of this, and jumping

forward, seized the boat-hook, and in person shoved off the pinnace from those hostile shores, on which he now unscrupulously left one, to whom he owed such signal obligations.

Charles beheld the act, and knew its full meaning, while the rest of his shipmates at once expected to see dealt out to him and his burthen, the death inflicted on the other straggler. Up came the herd of savages, bristling with spears and arrows, a forest of heavy clubs flourishing above their heads, and the most discordant cries issuing from their lips; but, to the surprise of all, and of none more than Sir Henry, not an arrow—not a weapon was raised against our hero! If the Christian possessed no heart to admire his devotion, it at least found the reward and admiration it deserved from the children of the wild, and either believing it was his father he caried, or respecting the mere act itself, they left him unharmed, and rushed with the most frantic cries to board the pinnace.

Had the English crew been armed, or had they even adhered to their plan of taking with

them the war canoe, they might have protracted the hour of doom. As it was they had been so hurried, and were so defenceless, that the canoe's head still lay resting on the beach; a swarm of the natives crowded into her; with the most impetuous fury, they boarded the pinnace on all quarters, and before the lapse of five minutes, every man was beat down or killed —fighting there was scarcely any, what with weakness, want of arms, and the greatly superior force against them, the men-of-war's-men possessed no chance in the combat, and by the time the sun was fairly above the horizon, the living and the dead were all bound to the stake, and the brushwood piled around them. The only parties exempted were those before selected, with the addition of the hard-drinking stupid Lieutenant, whom, either out of respect to the gallantry of the effort made to save him, or from thinking he was Charles's father or relation, they chose to spare. Poor Reginald, after all the efforts made to save him, still remained among the doomed, and when Lady Coxcomb beheld her boy on the point of immc-

lation, yet smiling in all the vacancy of idiotism, as if ignorant of the purpose for which he had been bound, shriek succeeded shriek, until raving happily terminated in insensibility. As for Sir Henry, every effort that could be devised to save his child he made, but stained as he was from head to foot with the blood of two of their chiefs, the savages appeared to guess the exquisite torture they were inflicting on him, and not only delighted in it, but seemed to spare his life simply to aggravate his woe. Lashed and helpless, they surrounded him with their spears, the points of which they perpetually thrust into his body, shouting, singing, and showing by the signs first directed to Sir Henry's clothes, and then to their slaughtered friends, their knowledge as to the death of these; Charles and the lady's maid alone seemed to possess any influence, and this was all exerted in vain to save the doomed.

Our hero, scarcely knowing how his aim was to be effected, endeavoured to burst away from those who held him, and gain the side of his persecuted shipmates; seeing which, the

natives once more confined him hand and foot, and thus effectually secured from his interruption, they proceeded in their horrible intentions.

Having set fire to the brushwood, the flames and smoke very speedily excluded from view the bodies of the unfortunate officers; while the worthy natives quite convinced that they had done the most meritorious action, lost no time in setting to work, and dancing to the gayest measure, round the scene of their atrocious sacrifice. One good effect certainly accompanied this last brutality, the screams of their victims were thus drowned, and although their companions had been forced to witness their immolation, they were at any rate spared the agony of hearing appeals for succour that they could not render.

If possible, the most revolting part of this ceremony was yet to ensue: the fire which had been lightly piled, had hardly become extinguished, when it was hastily dragged away from the yet reeking corses of the murdered men, their bodies taken down while still warm, and the trench cleared from the

brushwood, when the whole tribe of savages seating themselves in the warm circle, without any further ado, commenced a cannibal repast on the remains.*

Over the disgusting scene which followed, a veil may well be drawn, since even those who had been spared by the clemency of such wretches, seemed to feel that death would have been happier than the witnessing of such horrors; with an indescribable recklessness, as to whether he was now doomed to live or die, our hero resigned himself to the hard fate that had overtaken him; he and his companions being all forthwith unbound and given over to their various captors, and made to submit to the most menial employment.

On the following morning the worthy chiefs who had decided on every other part of their prisoners' destiny, proceeded with various rites to the burial of their dead, after which they found it comport with their dignity to examine into the minute particulars of their prize.

* Not ten years since the son of a late Staffordshire magistrate underwent this horrible end in one of the innumerable islands in this quarter of the globe.

Amongst other matters, they discovered one or two of the seamen's bags, which had been tossed into the pinnace by the compassion of some kind fellow, who pitied, as well he might, the miserable lot of men abandoned upon the ocean to sink or swim. All these various implements were now turned out upon the beach; and even in the midst of his misery it did provoke a smile from our hero, to remark, to ends how different from their original designs the savages converted those implements, the right use of which they were so little able to comprehend.

Among other matters thus exposed to general view were a set of shoemaker's tools. These the natives seemed utterly unable to adapt to any purpose whatever, they were therefore thrown idly by, as matters not worthy of regard. As our hero looked upon these familiar objects of his old calling, he could not help sighing deeply, while his memory reverted to the many cherished objects of regard which they recalled.

It occurred to him also, how little, when he entered his present profession, he dreamed ever

to have seen them under such circumstances, as then surrounded him; or to have known the time when he might fain wish himself back once more in his cobbler's stall. He thought also how completely for the present, at any rate, all his hopes and prospects seemed crushed; here, if his life was spared, it appeared but too probable that he should have to pass his days in the most wretched servitude, with a set of beings the very lowest in the scale of the creation.

Thoroughly overcome by these melancholy feelings he was only roused to a sense of what was passing around him, by sounds of something very like a quarrel, among the savages near at hand.

Ever on the alert to take advantage of circumstances as they might arise, our hero looked up and beheld two of the old chiefs wrangling most violently over a pair of boots.

It seems that one of the first efforts of the rude wisdom of their captors, had been to secure all the wearing apparel of their late different victims; nothing, however, appeared

more to strike their fancy, than the European shoes; one of the unfortunate officers chanced to have on a pair of boots, and this so immediately won the regard of all the cannibals, that the chief of the tribe instantly made a special claim upon the singular piece of property, and declared his intention of maintaining it, against all comers.

On the other hand, the worthy gentleman who had drawn them from the feet of their late possessor, seemed to conceive that he had the best right to retain the envied distinctions because he had mainly helped to eat their former wearer; both most angrily maintained their position, and from their language and extraordinary gestures, together with a frequent reference to their arms, our hero thought it more than probable, that one, if not both of them would lose their lives in this very edifying dissension. As for some seconds he continued to look on, and watch their irritating demeanor, he could not help smiling, to think how miserable was the object for which they were thus angrily contending, and that while he

a member of a civilized community, as he was, thus ridiculed the object of their strife, how very little better than the cannibals of the wild, were those children of the cities, who, now in far distant Europe, were with equal animosity, wearing out their lives in a struggle for baubles of scarcely greater intrinsic value than that old pair of boots, so ruthlessly stripped from the body of the dead man! and yet, said he, "At these wretches we laugh, in conscious superiority; must not then the spirits of those who have gone before us into a happier existence look down with equal contempt upon the objects of us all, whether they may be the boots of the savage chieftain, or the jewelled garter of the European Duke!"

Having indulged his philosophical temperament, thus far, it now occurred to our hero, that, if he had any intention of preventing the savages from cutting one another's throats, it would clearly be as well to make haste in its execution, since they certainly did not seem much inclined to delay that matter!—It may naturally be inquired why, after all our hero

had seen, he should entertain the slightest objection, either to their disposing of themselves in this or any other manner; but his motives were these; at present he conceived that, however badly himself and surviving companions were placed, it was still possible that they might be much worse off, if the command of the tribe changed hands. Moreover, the thought occurred to him, of the authority and interest he would gain, could he once prove himself of any decided utility to the vile community amongst which he had fallen; going up, therefore, to the angry disputants, he at once made signs to them that he, himself, was perfectly adequate to the production of those magnificent specimens of art, which they so much and so angrily desired.

On this score he certainly found most ready listeners, and having soon procured a dried hide, and set to work with the tools which the disputants had all neglected, he quickly proved to the admiring bystanders,—though from haste and the want of proper materials, in a very rude and imperfect manner,—that nothing was want-

ing to equip them all in the new fashion, but the allowance of sufficient time to their expert and certainly most willing workman. The change thus wrought in the condition of the various captives was perfectly magical; from this time forward, to no one work of servitude, however slight and unimportant, was our hero now allowed to set his crafty hand; attendants were appointed to wait upon him, with as much solicitude, as if he had suddenly married into the blood royal of the land; while, strange freak of Fortune! these attendants were none other than those to whom, as his undoubted superiors, he had lately scarce dared to lift his eye. Sir Henry Coxcomb and his lady, had themselves the pleasing office of bearing to him his leather, drawing water, &c. &c. and waiting his commands; and once when the worthy Baronet, overcome by the oppressive heat, and the weight of his burden, some reeking hides, seemed rather more leisurely in his movements, than suited the notions of his rude conquerors, they applied, with considerable vigour to his back, a heavy club of iron-wood, which they all ap-

peared to have carried so long as to be ignorant of its weight on such occasions; when, however, our hero saw Sir Henry thus treated, he with that good feeling which seemed inseparable from his conduct, at once interposed the weight of his authority, to which the savages certainly paid the most marked respect; and thus at once made it evident to the rude oppressors that such tyranny to his companions extended its disagreeable consequences, even to himself; though this demonstration had not the effect of entirely suppressing their ill-usage.

"If," said Charles, after his interposition, "the mutinous crew of the Tartar could only witness this last degradation of their late oppressor, what rejoicing it would occasion amongst them!—Surely they would think him fully repaid, though in his own coin."

Bitterly, indeed also, must Sir Henry himself have felt this reverse of fortune; but by no expression of any kind, whatever, did he allow to escape him the slightest hint of his feelings. It was rather on the broken spirit of Lady Coxcomb, that the burden seemed to fall most

sorely. For some days after the terrific termination of her son's existence, she possessed sufficient pride and presence of mind, to restrain all utterance of her agonies, deep as they were, but this effort could not long endure,—a violent attack of fever supervened, and this, to the surprise of all, sparing her life, left the mind so complete a wreck, that perfect madness would, perhaps, have been preferable. In this altered position of circumstances, we shall for a time leave them, while we return to Europe.

CHAPTER XVI.

When we last left our heroine and the fair Anna it will be remembered that the peace of both was threatened in no slight degree. The attentions of Captain Horace had been continued with the most pressing assiduity, and we lament to say the utmost success.

To this fatal denouement our heroine had given every facility, and aid in her power. Anxious to efface from her mind the remembrance of our hero, she spared no efforts to view in the most favourable light his rival, Captain Horace. But love is as little to be coerced as bought; anxiously as she strove to fan to the utmost warmth every spark of affection for the handsome lancer, she was still doomed to feel occasionally, in the lonely

watches of a sleepless night, in the dreamy state of half repose that preceded the hour of rising in the morning, and in short during a thousand intervals of quiet reflection, that a wide and fatal difference still existed between the tenderness, with which fond memory still clung to the image of the absent Charles, and rendered perpetually present his melancholy and intellectual countenance, and her apparently more prudent penchant for Horace. But by far the strongest hold over her affections existed in the remembrance of that boundless devotion towards her own person, which her lowly suitor had displayed in dedicating his whole life and soul, hopes and energies, to her love and service; the profound respect also which he had shewn in never breathing his passion to any living being, and the ability which he had displayed in rising so rapidly from his low estate for the sake of being worthy of her notice; all these reflections generated a mixture of pity and admiration that might have proved fatal to a colder heart;—still she had so success-

fully cheated her imagination into investing the Captain's character with a thousand agreeable qualities, which existed nowhere but in her own mind, that she had all but arrived at the determination of accepting him for her husband, as soon as ever he could find courage to make her the offer.

It may easily be supposed, that if affairs had arrived at this crisis on her part, so experienced a tactician as the Captain was not likely to be left much behind-hand on his.

As nearly as possible at the same period as that at which Lady Siberia had arrived at her dangerous decision, the gallant officer had seen through the state of her feelings sufficiently to come to the resolution, that he might now "pop the question," with a certainty of success. Exactly on the day which completed five weeks from the date of his mother's ball, had Captain Horace determined to carry his plans into effect.

Cogitating the matter well over before he rose, his first act after breakfast was to despatch to his charmer a note, appointing, on some

trivial excuse, an hour for making the visit that was to finish his victory. Having sent this by his servant, he strolled out soon afterwards; and to convince himself that the heiress's broad lands were already his own, went to his coachmaker and ordered a couple of new carriages. In the mean time his billet-doux had been duly carried to Lady Siberia.

For the last month past she had been accustomed to open similar notes from the same quarter constantly, without their exciting any very particular emotion; but on this especial day, whether from the struggle that had been passing through her own mind, or whether from some presentiment of which we hear so much, and see so little, I know not,—certainly when she received this note in question, a strong tremor came over her.

"Surely," said she, "he can never propose to me by a letter," murmured our heroine as she re-read the superscription, and fancied she could detect a very hymeneal cross to one of the *t*'s; the bare thought of such a matter increased her agitation -tenfold; "if it is an offer," pur-

sued Siberia, "shall I accept him or not?" Rising with the note in her hand, she went to the window and remained for a few seconds lost in thought, then at last, seeming to gather fresh courage, she murmured to herself:—

"Yes, I will.—Once the wife of another, and that other, one whom I already so much esteem, this degrading remembrance of a party so much below me, will have power to haunt me no more."

With the air of one who carries off some treasure to enjoy it more fully in private, Siberia turned, without opening the note, and bore it to the seclusion of her own room! Here having arranged herself with the greatest deliberation, so as to enjoy to the utmost, every tender expression, every sweet sentiment of the chosen swain, who was about to entreat from her affection the tenderest title that one human being can give another, she broke open the delicate impression, drew forth from the cover the gilt-edged inclosure, and read as follows:

"Berkeley Square, Wednesday morning.

"My dear Old Cock o'Wax,—You are a d—d good fellow, and no mistake. I have received the tin you sent me, and I am deeply indebted to you for it. In another day or two, as soon as I have hooked the troublesome heiress, whose final consent to our marriage I hope to get either to-day or to-morrow, I will repay you back the whole amount, with a thousand thanks for the accommodation. You may well ask, how it is I have been so long in bringing this said Lady S— to reason; and in truth I am heartily sick of her myself, her heart seems as cold as the desert she is named after, more especially, when contrasted with that of her darling friend. The fact is,—but you know what are my real motives for the match, and so it is no use being fastidious; you need not answer this, I shall want you in a few days for the interesting ceremony, and will most likely ride down and have a chat with you over the whole matter, so, till then, bye, bye.

"I am, my dear Fellow, yours most truly,

"HORACE HARTLESSE.

"To the Right Hon. Lord Hubert Scapegrace."

Surprise, incredulity and rage, by turns filled the breast of Lady Siberia, as her eye, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, rapidly traversed over this characteristic note from the devoted and exquisite Captain Horace. Three times she read it over, before she could bring herself to form any correct opinion on its contents; at last, however, she did arrive at something very like a right conclusion, as to its nature, namely, that it was a note from her true swain, originally intended for his friend Lord Hubert Scapegrace, but which by some, for her, most happy accident, had either been placed in the wrong cover, or been misdirected to her, instead of his Lordship; the latter having, no doubt, received the one intended for her. If the least doubt existed in her mind on this point, it was fully and finally set at rest by the fourth reading, when she espied the following postscript, which had before missed her attention.

"P.S. I am now writing a note to the "*haress*," as the Quarter-master phrases it, to appoint an hour for popping the question; and

have invited Huntley and one or two other chums to dine with me at the Clarendon, on the strength thereof: if there be the least spirit of prophesy among my duns, which I suppose there is,—or the gift has departed out of Israel, —how seraphically the Jewish rascals will sleep to-night."

Dashing the note down under foot, and rising and pacing the room for many minutes, in the utmost fury, poor Lady Siberia, for some considerable space of time, hardly knew how to give vent to the chaos of passions that assailed her. At last a heavy flood of tears burst forth, and throwing herself on her couch, she remained in silent indulgence of her woe, until the excess of her agony subsided.

Then rose in arms all that strong immitigable pride, which had been the chief inducement in her struggle against the image of the absent wanderer. The first point to be determined was this simple question, was or was not this note in the hand-writing of Captain Horace? No one could doubt for an instant that it was. The fact was avouched by his own

signature,—next, did he, or did he not mean, by the troublesome heiress, to allude to her? A somewhat longer debate followed this question, but it was finally settled with equal decision against the Captain, for though the actual name was only given, as Lady S—, yet the mention of the desert fixed that name as completely as if given at full length. The only remaining question, was, could there be any doubt as to his motives in endeavouring to gain her hand?

For a long time poor Siberia endeavoured to fence off the truth, in this quarter; it is difficult, indeed, for any woman, or man either, to admit that mercenary inducements alone, have led to their alliance being courted.

In the present case, however, this truth stared our heroine too fully in the face, not only twice over in the body of the letter, but also again in the postscript. She was at last reluctantly compelled to admit, that the fact was undoubted. The heartless tone of banter, moreover, with which Captain Horace had dared to write of her, aggravated the offence four-fold, and the only question which now remained in

her mind, was, as to the treatment of the offender; at first, she determined simply to dismiss his suit, and then as rapidly as possible to banish his remembrance. Still his conduct had been so exceedingly atrocious, that we need not feel much surprise if enough of the mortal remained in Siberia's composition, to suggest the propriety of some heavier punishment. Had she only been aware of the extent to which the gallant Captain was involved, she certainly would have desired no greater penalty than that which her refusal would undoubtedly carry with it, but of this she could form no proper estimate; moreover, there still existed in her mind a lurking desire to find out beyond any possibility of doubt, whether Captain Horace's motives had really been as mercenary as from that note they appeared; these feelings induced her to show the exquisite document at once to her Uncle, and after hearing his advice, to accept or reject it, as she felt most inclined.

CHAPTER XVII.

If Lady Siberia had been enraged on reading Captain Horace's epistle, words are faint to express the wrath it excited in the mind of Sir George.

At first he wished quietly to get out of the room, without saying anything, as to what his intentions might be. This Siberia knew to be a foreboding of the deadliest intentions, and candidly telling her Uncle that she would have no duelling in the matter, for her own sake, on pain of her leaving his roof altogether, he then took into consideration, her proposal of punishing the gallant Officer, in some manner more suitable to his offence. One passage in the Captain's letter clearly hinted that Horace would rather Anna should have been the heiress,

than that she (Siberia) should have been so favoured.

Acting on this hint, it was agreed between the three, that Captain Horace should still be permitted to make his proposals, and that Siberia should accept them; telling him by way of warning, that the public rumour, which assigned to her so much wealth, was erroneous. While they were yet debating in Siberia's boudoir, the servant came to announce that the gallant Captain was already in the drawing-room. On hearing this, much persuasion was requisite to induce sufficient self-denial on the part of Sir George, to forego the indulgence of rushing down stairs and kicking the gallant Captain on the spot. In a few minutes the plot was finally arranged, and Lady Siberia having retired to her room, to efface the marks of her tears, descended to the well satisfied wooer.

Despite all that she necessarily felt on the occasion, our heroine could scarcely keep her countenance, when the Captain with a smile that bespoke him quite at his ease, as to the

issue of his visit, glided gracefully and rapidly to her side, rapturously seized her hand, and imprinted on it a shower of kisses. The first object they talked about, was of course the opera—when anything of importance is behind —the chances are ten thousand to one, but the unfortunate opera is thrust forward to bear the burden of the song.

A very pleasant state of mind Siberia was in, nicely to discuss the merits of Signora Varbleini, and Signor Marroboni, &c. &c.; Captain Horace did observe her eyes were red with crying, but he forbore to make any remark on this head, as he modestly set it down to a desire on Siberia's part to look the interesting. After the skirmishers of the conversation had finished their fire, there was a general silence along the line—a dead pause—Siberia fixed her eyes on the languid fire, while Captain Horace seemed particularly attentive to the health of the Mignionette, in the open window. It was evident, despite our heroine's wishes to the contrary, that some additional coolness, had crept into her manner, the chill of which had

diffused itself to the Captain's; we have said that Horace was an experienced tactician, in an instant he had perceived that all was not right, though utterly at a loss to account for the change. For a few seconds his wariness almost saved him, as he afterwards told Lord Hubert. The question did arise in his mind whether he should propose that day or not. The remembrance, however, of his friends whom he had asked to dine with him at the Clarendon, and the couple of extra carriages he had ordered, all on the strength thereof, decided him the other way; though it had not escaped his eye that Lady Siberia had placed herself in a chair, instead of seating herself near him on the sofa; he was sorry for this, for Horace had always laid it down as a general rule of action never to make an offer to a lady, until he occupied such a position that his disengaged arm might, by some instinctive impulse, find its way unconsciously as it were to the fair one's waist.

Now as Horace's arm was not some ten feet long, nor capable of threading its way under a loo table and between some couple of

chaises longues, this matter required adjustment. How should it be managed?—The weather.—Ah! what would an Englishman be without his eternal weather for ever at hand, with its clouds and rain to link together the straggling parts of his unimpassioned conversation?

"Have you ridden to-day, Siberia?" inquired the Captain, suddenly rising and going to the window, and using a familiarity of address, on which he had sometimes, but rarely ventured. Lady Siberia paused for a moment.

She saw Captain Horace was halting somewhat in his advance, and fearful that he might have found out his mistake of the note, determined to lead him on to the charge by addressing him for the first time by his christian name only, and saying—naughty little hypocrite!—

"No, Horace, I have not."

The pike ran at this spun minnow in a moment. Turning quickly round at the word "Horace," the Captain was in an instant by her side, and, taking up a fresh position, within arm's length, leaned gracefully over the back of her chair with one hand, and gently

detained our heroine's taper fingers with the other.

Siberia's heart throbbed so loudly, she could hear its every pulse; and, but for the effort required to restrain her starting tears, felt as if she should every moment have fainted on the spot.

Even then,—even after all she knew, she still doubted whether some mistake had not been made; whether it was possible that so fine, so captivating a looking being as the one beside her, could really throw so much apparent tenderness, and devotion into his manner, and yet nurse so much deceit at his heart, and this while she could actually feel the trembling of that hand that held her own. But as she felt this softness growing over her, she resolutely forced her remembrance back to the cold jesting mockery of his letter, and determined to be firm.

"Dearest Siberia," commenced the Captain, in so gentle, and so tremulous a tone, that it was barely audible, and nothing more, "your quick senses cannot have disguised from your-

self the intense passion with which your virtues and your beauty have filled me, I know how presumptuous it must be in any man, to think of inspiring you, worshipped and adored as you are in every quarter, with similar sentiments, still I have most jealously watched for the slightest symptom of disapproval on your part; and, in the absence of this, will you forgive me the intoxication produced by your own perfection, if on the eve of being summoned to my regiment, I thus endeavour to ascertain whether I am to leave you the most happy, or the most miserable of beings?—You do not speak!—you do not answer me! Am I wrong in interpreting your silence, favourably? This dear hand—still Dearer Siberia—may I —dare I venture to ask to be blessed with its guardianship through the remainder of our lives?"

Here the passionate Horace, in the most passionate of styles, covered the aforesaid hand with innumerable kisses, his sparkling eyes bespeaking a degree of triumph, the most opposed to the assumed humility of his manner. By

this time Lady Siberia, stimulated by the necessity of the moment, had quite recovered all her composure. Determined not to spare Horace one atom of suspense, she took her own time in answering the question, which, since it had been fairly "popp'd," now left her completely mistress of the field. After looking on the ground for some time, and feigning to make several attempts at speaking, as if something highly distressing were in the back ground, she at length replied—

"Before I make any answer, one way or the other, I have a very painful duty to perform. I have no doubt you will blame me for not discharging it before; I entreat you, however, to believe me, when I assure you, that I have made every effort to act rightly. It is only now, however, that I can believe the necessity of my speaking out thus decidedly. Am I or am I not right in thinking that you take a warm—I may say a very warm interest in my friend Anna?"

At this question the Captain's face crimsoned to the very roots of his hair, and after exhibit-

ing for a few seconds every symptom of confusion, he replied—

"An interest! yes, of course, dearest Siberia; I take an interest in any friend of yours; but, I hope, you do not for a moment believe anything more."

"Why really," commenced Siberia, "with one so beautiful, any man might be excused."

"Then whoever told you so, dear Siberia," warmly interposed the Captain, "has done me a cruel wrong. I swear to you, you are the only woman I ever did—I ever could, or ever should love!—To you, and you only—"

"Well, but hear me out—I was merely going to say, that before I even listen to the offer you have done me the honour to make, I must give you this explanation. I know that no mercenary motives would ever weigh with you, in determining any choice you would make—"

"—Not in the most distant manner on earth."

"I was sure of it; still I leave you quite unfettered; because however strong love may be, it can never endure unless prudence sup-

ports its foundations, and it is only right that the happiness of parents should be consulted as well as our own. I will, therefore, tell you, without any attempt at disguise, that a very great error has been committed by the public, in assigning to my friend Anna and myself, our different fortunes. A report has been prevalent here, that my fortune is very large, the fact of the case is, knowing how much trouble this reputation of a large fortune, brings to its possessor, our friend Anna first countenanced the belief that I was the heiress, and herself the dependant. Nothing can, however, be further from the truth than this; the real heiress is our friend Anna herself, and though I am not in a dependant position, and look at income as a very secondary matter, still I think it fair before you are allowed to prolong the offer you have placed before me, to say that my friend is in reality the heiress that I am asserted to be. The usual fate of a peer's daughter has attended me, twenty thousand pounds are secured to me by the marriage settlements, and the will of my mother; in case of

my marriage, half that sum is at my disposal, and my uncle has power to insist on the remainder being settled before our union. Now that you know something of the circumstances by which I am surrounded, I leave you perfectly free to repeat your offer or to withdraw it."

Up to this moment Horace had held Siberia's captive hand in his. It was true, that the extreme tenderness of his pressure upon those taper fingers had gradually diminished, and that he had imperceptibly, as he hoped, withdrawn his left arm from behind Siberia's chair.

At the last climax, however, he seemed so fairly taken by surprise, as suddenly to let fall the hand he held altogether; while, adept as he was in dissimulation, his head drooped back upon his own chair, and his features rapidly blanched to a colour of the palest hue.

Siberia's eagle glance was upon him, watching these various changes. His confusion and evident annoyance, were to her matters of the

most keen and exquisite delight. With a mind completely cleared of every doubt as to his conduct, she now first began to appreciate the escape with which she had been blessed, and to regain her own composure and command in the most perfect degree.

Anxious as she was to act her part with becoming gravity, a smile would every now and then steal round the corners of her mouth as she marked the struggles of her companion, and the difficulty he had in making any reply to her whatever.

Determined not to help out but to enjoy his confusion, she sat quite silent, until the gallant Captain faltered forth,—

"Nothing can be more wrong or reprehensible, than these false reports of people's property. As a soldier, Lady Siberia, I need not tell you how poor a man I am myself, and as I can only look to my father for assistance, though I do not myself place the slightest value upon pecuniary matters, still as you observe, we have a duty to perform to our parents; and therefore, as it was with my

father's knowledge I was about to make a proposal which you have interrupted, I think it would not be dealing fairly with him did I take any other course, than, with your kind leave, to suspend all further conversation on this subject, until I have had an opportunity of delivering to Lord Stoneley the information you have now given me."

"Oh certainly, most certainly! it is a very prudent and praiseworthy resolution on your part, and one which fully answers all my expectations; it was an awkward thing as you see for me to explain, but I felt that in all these matters, the greater the candour the greater the delicacy."

"Exactly, Lady Siberia! and believe me, whatever may be our future relations in life, I shall ever feel most grateful for your conduct to-day, and let my father's decision be what it will, I hope you will at least accord to me the delight of possessing your warm estimation as a friend."

Here Captain Horace hastily rose, and pressing Siberia's hand within his own, raised

it once more to his lips, though in a vastly different manner from that of the first salutation, and rapidly vanished from the room.

Siberia waited patiently till she heard the door close, and then indulged in a loud and hearty roar of laughter;—to this laughter, however, succeeded tears, and when Sir George and Anna entered the room where her interview with Horace had taken place, they found our heroine in hysterics.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In whatever shape the lightning of Heaven may present itself, it is rarely to be made a subject of sport with impunity. So also those who amuse themselves with the passions of the human heart, generally discover in the end, that the cup of *Circe* has its poison. When Lady Siberia awoke on the following morning, the pain with which she reverted to the past was most considerable.

Happily, however, the wounds that most afflicted her were those of sore and insulted pride, rather than affection, and now that the small degree of tenderness which she had ever felt for her late suitor was thus violently attacked, she became the more inclined to revert, though almost insensibly, to the image

of one, who, as she too well knew, worshipped her image for the sake of herself alone.

Memory, with a fidelity which she almost wished, yet had not heart to chide, pictured the delicate and intellectual features, the symmetrical and youthful form, the high souled courage and lofty principle of that absent adorer, who, to quote the words of Beattie's Minstrel,

"braved,
"The surge and tempest lighted by her ray."

Yes, she could not help admitting, as she contrasted the two characters, that it was in the chivalric hope of rendering himself worthy of her notice, that he had dared all the horrors of an arduous profession, and all the dangers of a hateful element; "and for whom," concluded she, "have I abandoned the remembrance of such devotion?"

This question was followed by a long drawn sigh, and presently a large bright tear slowly coursed down the cheek of the haughty beauty, and sank upon the swelling pillow on which

her exquisite bust and snowy neck reposed. Ah! if Charles, then absent and in danger, could have seen that tear, and have known that his memory and sufferings were hallowed by it, though even in the most distant degree, what rapture would have been conveyed by the knowledge! How infinite a stimulus afforded for all future exertion, if further stimulus could be added to so high a reward!

The traces of Siberia's emotion were still lying unchased from the fair skin they had moistened, when a knock was heard at Siberia's door, and the gentle voice of Anna soliciting permission to enter. Hastily passing her handkerchief across her faultless features, Siberia gave the accustomed permission to her friend, by drawing the night-bolt, and in a few minutes Anna's arm was round her friend's neck.

Seeing that the latter held a packet in her hand, Siberia, with natural curiosity, demanded its nature. There was a little confusion in Anna's face at this question, as she replied, "Why, to tell you truth, it is a packet from my brother,

and in my last I had ventured to say who was paying his addresses to you, and that we both rather feared the interested nature of his motives, and Charles has been bold enough on this to"—

"Well! why do you pause?—To do what?—why don't you tell me?"

"Why, I am afraid you will be angry," replied Anna, who to this class of emotions attributed the rapid transitions of colour, which she beheld succeeding each other in Siberia's countenance, at last she replied :—

"Oh! Charles has done no harm, you might be sure of that from him, only he has written some lines, and really, do you know, I think them very true."

"Read them," faintly said Siberia. Throwing the most perfect of all rounded arms across her face, as she lay upon her pillow, so that her speaking features could no longer play the tell-tale to her thoughts; while the agitated bosom quickly heaving with the tumultuous throb of excited feeling, was equally concealed from view, she gave up her whole attention to

Anna, who, with a voice trembling with sisterly affection, read the following lines :—

"THE HEIRESS."

Sad is her lot, whom fortune leaves the heir
To dreams of splendour, and a life of care ;
By gold corrupted swiftly flies repose,
And Envy changes former friends to foes :
Unnumber'd suitors still the prize pursue,
And still when most protesting, most untrue.
Whom may she trust, when all alike betray ?
Vice in the grave, and folly in the gay !
Trust not to tears, for falsehood lies in these;
Trust not to smiles, since all will smile to please ;
Trust not to rank, that seeks its chains to gild,
Nor honied lips, with cozening phrases filled,
Trust not to wealth, which still would swell its store,
And when did riches ever trust the poor ?
Youth, age, nor station, Wisdom's choice controul,
For God's sole noble, is a noble Soul.
On these alone true confidence may lie,
Truth's fearless front, and Honour's guileless eye :
To high or low, to rich or poor if given,
These are the only warranties of Heaven.

When the reading of these verses was finished, Anna, observing that Lady Siberia continued silent, became alarmed, either lest her brother might be deemed too bold, or that she herself might have over-rated the quality of

his attempt. In a low voice, therefore, Anna timidly enquired,

"What do you think of them, Lady Siberia?" She had to repeat the question twice, however, before she could gain any reply, and then, in tones that bespoke the intensity of her emotions, Siberia answered,

"They are most just! how strange in truth is the coincidence that should have brought them to our hands at such a juncture!"

"It is, indeed; but the best news I have reserved to the last, dear Charles has had another opportunity of distinguishing himself, and has been made Lieutenant—"

"—Impossible!" cried Lady Siberia, starting up on her couch with a degree of animation and delight that carried rapture to the heart of the affectionate sister. Then, as if conscious of having displayed more excitement on the subject than was prudent, Siberia added, in a more calm voice,—"That is, I shall be delighted for his sake and yours, to hear that it is so; only I fear the rules of the service do not permit so sudden a promotion."

"Oh yes! but they do," interrupted the transported sister, "for I have shewn the letter to Sir George, and he says that, though a very unusual step, he has no doubt that in this case an exception will be made."

"Most devoutly do I hope it may," said Siberia, folding Anna in her arms, while the burst of feeling that had so long been swelling at the proud girl's heart, found relief at length in a tumultuous flood of tears, while resolves that had no slight influence on her future character at that instant first arose in her mind.

CHAPTER XIX

During the stay of Sir George Auberville's family in London, it had generally been the habit of Lady Siberia to prefer horse exercise to any other, and the worthy Horace had generally been her companion. Anna, whose disposition led her to dread this delightful though somewhat dangerous amusement, was reduced to the necessity of using the carriage, in which she sometimes had the society of Sir George, but more frequently the tedium of riding alone.

Two days after the receipt of Charles's letter, she proposed to Lady Siberia a drive in the Park, this however was rendered impracticable, by Lady Stoneley having written to say she would call between half-past three and five o'clock.

Anna wished very much to remain at home, but this Siberia peremptorily refused, saying, that she should feel no scruple in ordering her horses to the door, as soon as she had despatched her visitor, and trusting to chance for finding some one to supply the place of her late equerry; as she generally met the Duke of Diddlebury, and half a score of others whom she well knew, either in the Row or on their way to it. Thus urged, Anna agreed to comply with the request.

Sir George Auberville had been obliged early that morning to repair to Greenwich on some matter of business, and with this arrangement of the day the friends parted.

As nearly as Anna could calculate, the carriage had been in the Park half an hour, when a servant in plain undress livery, his horse covered with foam, rode after Sir George's coachman, in one of the more secluded drives, in the Bayswater portion of Hyde Park, and called on him to stop. The man immediately pulled up the horses, and as a natural consequence, Anna let down the window, which the

strange servant seeing, forthwith approached her side, and told her that he was sent off from his master, Admiral Whitehouse, to say that Sir George Auberville had met with a dreadful accident at the Admiral's house, and requested her immediate attendance. Frightened out of her senses, poor Anna immediately exclaimed, "Have you told Lady Siberia?"

"She has already gone, Miss," was the servant's reply, and begs you will follow without delay.

"Oh! I will, I will," exclaimed Anna, wringing her hands, "only pray tell the coachman where to drive, and give him the plainest directions how to reach the house, that no time may be lost."

"I will, ma'am," replied the man, entering upon the task; — a world of minute directions here followed, which the coachman could not at all comprehend; and after these worthies had disputed, according to Anna's estimation, for at least ten minutes, it was quite clear that the coachman knew

almost as much as he did, before Admiral Whitehouse's servant began.

At last, after much bother, the latter, with great respect remarked, "The way is so difficult for any stranger to find, that I almost think it would be better for the coachman to get down, and take my horse to a stable, and I can get up and drive you there; I am used to drive master's carriage constantly."

"Oh! certainly, certainly," replied Anna, and at this the coachman removed from his box, and made the proposed exchange. Just as the strange servant was on the point of mounting the dickey, he turned to the second servant, behind the carriage, saying, "You may go home with coachman, if you like, you will only make the load of the horses heavier, and I can tell you they will have to drive both fast and far enough already as it is."

At this cool way of getting rid of his services, John, to whom the remonstrance was addressed, seemed anything but pleased, in being turned off, what he considered his own carriage; and would certainly have made a stout opposition

to the whole affair if Anna had not called to him from the window, and begging that every facility might be afforded the servant of Admiral Whitehouse in driving her to Sir George, requested that John would return home with the coachman. To this command, therefore, John was obliged with no good grace to submit, and in a few seconds Sir George's carriage was driving furiously through the Park into Oxford Street. The two servants were left behind grumbling very considerably, at being thus suddenly dispossessed of their authority, and all at the *ipse dixit* of one no better than themselves; Anna, in the meanwhile, absorbed by the depth of her grief, at what had happened, never thought of noticing which way she was driven. Nor did it appear at all strange, that soon after they quitted the Park, the carriage suddenly pulled up, and Admiral Whitehouse's servant informed her how his master had very considerately sent forward post horses to meet them. To this Anna only replied by begging to know how they left Sir George, and being informed that he was still in a very dangerous

condition, she sank back in tears, begging them to hurry on, which Admiral Whitehouse's servant most implicitly promised to do. He certainly was as good as his word; in a few seconds the post-horses were put to—and away they dashed, with all the precipitate haste which a matter of such life and death required.

Despite Anna's absorbing grief, it soon became evident that the dwelling of Admiral Whitehouse was at a much greater distance from town than she could possibly have imagined; she really felt herself under great obligation to the ready kindness of the fellow, who had suggested the utter impossibility of Sir George's servants ever finding the right way. She was convinced they might have as well attempted to reach the moon. After stopping to change horses more frequently than she could have imagined necessary, she finally came to a halt, on what appeared to Anna, from the best view she could form of it, to be a wide naked common, while some figure on horseback, rode up and instantly dismounted.

A few words were exchanged between the new comer and Admiral Whitehouse's servant who was behind, and the latter hastily jumped from his seat; the door was opened, and to Anna's amazement, some one sprung in by her side. As the light the moon gave was very slight, our friend could not at first discern who was her companion: be he who he might, however, he clasped her hand in the most tender, impassioned strain, and spoke in a low gentle tone, some common place she did not catch; her surprise, however, scarcely left her power of utterance, when in the voice, she recognized the Honourable Horace Hartlesse. As it must be confessed that Anna was one of those who had not been able to keep herself wholly beyond the spell of Master Horace's attractions, a feeling rather of pleasure, than any other emotion, possessed her mind, at finding who was beside her.

"How is dear Sir George?" were the first words she uttered on returning the friendly clasp of Horace; and as she said this, she could not help observing something like a smile steal over the countenance beside her.

"Oh! Sir George," replied the other. "Oh! you need not distress yourself about him; I may say he is quite as well as may be expected."

"But is he out of danger?" demanded the other.

"Oh! quite so, certainly," replied Horace; then muttering to himself.—"I only wish I was as much so."

"But are we far from him? Surely he cannot be at any great distance."

"Far? far, distant?—no; not any very great distance."

"Shall we see him soon?"

"Why! as to that, much sooner than I could wish, I dare say."

"Your words are very strange, Captain Horace; pray will you tell me, how you come to be mixed up in this matter, and what your share in it is."—

Here followed a long pause, which terminated, to the horror of Anna, in the elegant Captain Horace, endeavouring to insert his arm round Anna's waist, which honour she silently, but most respectfully begged leave to

decline, while he demanded in a voice of the most melo-dramatic emotion, whether she could forgive his adoration of herself. In an instant the whole truth flashed before her.

"What then," she demanded, "the story of Sir George's illness is a hoax? say but that Sir George is well, and I forgive you all the rest towards myself," exclaimed the affectionate girl. Horace either touched, or affecting to be so, replied instantly, "He is as well as his best friends could possibly desire."

"Thank God, for that!"—and Anna threw herself back in the carriage, for some minutes in silence, and, covering her face with her handkerchief, burst into tears. Horace did not attempt to interrupt this natural burst of emotion for some space, at last, attempting to take one of her hands, he demanded, "Do you forgive me?"

At once uncovering her features, Anna looked calmly round, and asked in reply :—

"Tell me, Sir, whither we are driving?" There was something so unexpected in the style of the conduct of his patient, that Horace,

with all his experience, was quite taken aback; so thinking that the naked truth might perhaps serve him better than any other statement, he briefly answered—"Gretna Green."

"I thought as much."

"Say that you forgive me."

"Forgive you," replied Anna, bursting into a hearty laugh, that quite electrified the youth beside her.

"Say that you will accompany me!"

"Were I to look more to your punishment than to my own happiness, I certainly should. As it is, I must tell you that no man can be more thoroughly duped and taken in, than you have been. I know very well what has induced you to this outrage on my liberty; Lady Siberia has secretly informed me of the whole of your late passage with herself, she has told you that I am the heiress, and not she; allow me then to undeceive you; and say that this was merely a feint to test the strength of your affection, and to ascertain whether, as she feared, it was to the heiress rather than the lady, your attentions were directed. Unfortunately for yourself

your fears outbalanced your discretion; how could you believe that any one would dare to play on society such a cheat, as she described to you? I should have imagined that a moment's consideration would have detected so thinly veiled a falsehood. Remember, as you still seem to look so incredulously on me, if this prank of Lady Siberia's changing characters with her uncle's dependant were true, she must not only have thus deceived you, but all the rest of the society in which she was moving, including the Duke of Diddlebury, and a whole host of her own noble relations; but even if a wild girl might have ventured on such a prank, how could Sir George Auberville, a responsible person, dare to sanction and support it? Consider it for an instant, and I am sure you must see the truth, namely, that you have succeeded in capturing the shadow of your dreams, while the substance has perfectly eluded your grasp; under these circumstances, I hope you will at once turn the horses' heads, and restore me to my home."

What the exact effect produced upon the

worthy Horace by this most reasonable treatment of the subject was, Anna could not exactly see, but as far as hearing went, he seemed perfectly stricken into silence; nor is it possible to say, what would have been the nature of his remarks, had the opportunity to speak been allowed him, for at this moment, the figure of a man on horseback dashed past the carriage, giving the word to halt, twice: not finding it obeyed, the new comer in regular sabre-like fashion, raised a tolerably stout stick, and making it perform a half circle round his head, the end descended with such force upon the crown of the hinder postillion, that his saddle was empty in an instant, dashing on to the one ahead, the third command to halt was given, and the boy having heard the blow behind him and seeing the effect, thought proper to avoid a second by a timely compliance, and pulled up. In the mean time Horace, who did not at all want metal, had got the near window down, and the door open, and as soon as the carriage came to a pause, leapt out upon the

ground just as the daring horseman came bounding up to the same spot.

Flourishing in his hand that baton of which he had shewn himself so perfect a master, he no sooner recognized the features of Horace than down came one of his most potent blows upon the curly temples of the youth, who measured his length upon the ground, before he had time to utter one word. "There you young Coxcomb, take that for making so free with my carriage."

"Dear Sir George, is that you?" demanded Anna, putting out her arms, as soon as she heard the well known voice of the veteran.

"Yes, my darling, of course it is, how are you? are you well? Have you been hurt? How did this all happen? and where did that d—d puppy pollute my carriage by entering it?"

"Not ten minutes since, dear Sir George," said Anna, first answering the last question, which she perceived, by the way in which it was put, possessed more interest in the mind of the querist, than all the rest together; she then added, "I am perfectly well, and as to

the manner in which this silly attempt was made—"—Here, however, Anna was interrupted by the arrival of three of Sir George's servants mounted on horseback, followed by a chaise and four: changing the postillions and the two carriages, he rapidly gave orders to have the wounded man picked up, and stowed in the postchaise; chose the freshest steeds for his own carriage, and giving the short order "home," jumped "on board his prize," as he termed it. As soon as Sir George's servants had closed the door, and he had drawn up the window, we, as a circumspect and exceedingly proper writer, hardly know how to discharge our duty to the public, when we find ourselves compelled to avow the fact, that the gallant officer, with all the ardour of five and twenty! dear delightful age! seized Anna's hand, pressed it most fervently to his lips, and finding no resistance made to this salute, drew the beautiful girl gently towards him, and from her downcast lips first stole one kiss, and then emboldened by the theft, at least a dozen more. What followed in that long and

delightful moonlight rapid ride, 'twere hard to tell; alas, we know they are most dangerous things, those well stuffed chariots, *tête a tête*, with a beautiful woman for your companion! That is, they are to the world in general, but to Sir George Auberville, over whom love never had, never could, never *should* have any power, as he had ever been wont for long years to assert—why of course they were innoxious as the deadly Cerastes, to the antidoted hand of the charmer. Under these circumstances, of course it is quite evident that Sir George must have snored in one corner, and the gentle Anna slumbered lightly in the other.

CHAPTER XX.

Exercising the privilege undoubtedly possessed by all Novelists, who like the Houses of Parliament, think it wisest to be the interpreters of their own powers, we now pass by, with the briefest summary, a period amounting to nearly three years, from the memorable night of Sir George's *tête-a-tête* ride with the fair Anna; during this interval had occurred, however, one or two matters of which the reader ought to be informed, together with sundry minor events, the acquaintance with which can do him no possible harm.

To begin, therefore, where we left off, strange as it may appear, our friend Horace was not satisfied with the summary justice which Sir George Auberville had dispensed in

his behalf, and on the following day, his friend Lord Hubert waited on the gallant Baronet, to demand "satisfaction," for divers and sundry blows.

"With all the pleasure in life," quoth Sir George!—"will Holland Park, to-morrow morning at six suit you? and I will take care to bring some friend with me." Lord Hubert was somewhat staggered at the promptness of the Baronet, but frankly admitted the suitableness of the time and place.—"Pistols, of course," said Sir George, bowing his Lordship out.

"Of course," was the reply.

On the following morning, three sets of shots were exchanged, the result of which were two holes in Sir George's hat, and a good half of Horace's handsome nose carried clean away by one of Sir George's bullets. The parties being now *perfectly* satisfied, returned to their respective homes, and in the next evening paper, Sir George and his family were considerably shocked, by reading the account of an inquest on Captain Horace's remains,

by which it appeared that the gallant Captain had taken a large dose of laudanum, and thus become entitled to a verdict of temporary insanity.

During the following week a mutual friend of Sir George and the father of the deceased, met his lordship at his club;—as they were in a retired corner of the room, the friend by right of his old intimacy, endeavoured in the gentlest and kindest manner, to whisper some few words of consolation to the afflicted parent, as to the grievous loss Lord Stoneley had sustained, as well as to hint how utterly he,—the friend,—had been surprised by the event.

"Why, really," said the peer, laying the newspaper on his knee for a moment, "what else could the poor boy do? You see he was in debt so largely to every one, that he could find no one to give any further credit! All his friends possessed more of his acceptances than ever could be honoured, and I had long ago reached the last limit of assistance I could render him, so that when that unlucky affair happened

with his nose, he really fell quite out of the market—Very fine young man, but precipitate!"

And the peer turning over the newspaper proceeded to read on, while his consoling friend, quite convinced that such a grief was beyond his art, withdrew. Not in this fashion, however, was this affair felt in the household of Sir George.

To say that Lady Siberia had ever loved Horace, would be untrue; in common with the rest of the world, her eye had been flattered, and from a matter of principle and mistaken sense of duty, she had endeavoured to believe that admiration was affection;—Horace's conduct, however, at the last, had quite dispelled this delusion, and on the night when Anna returned, contempt was largely mixed in both their bosoms, with extreme anger, at the thoughts of the unworthy,—the unprincipled,—the cowardly mode in which he had treated them.

His death, however, in so sudden and unexpected a manner, softened down their

feelings very greatly. Pity pleaded in extenuation the temptation he might have had to undergo,—while the utmost joy was entertained by both the friends, when Sir George at breakfast, diverted all their melancholy thoughts, by reading the gazette, containing the King's order in Council, for the promotion of Charles to the rank of Lieutenant, dispensing with the remainder of his Midshipman's time; an honour, which had then been conferred on no other individual during the war, with the exception of the blood royal.

After the warm congratulations, here tendered to Anna were over, Sir George proposed the immediate return of the family into Devonshire; the proposition met with the warmest support from both its hearers, and another week saw them once more safely settled at Cliffville, anxiously expecting the arrival of Charles from the scene of his well-won honours, and fully determined to give him the reception due to an undoubted hero.

As for the enraptured Anna she formed a calendar, and began, with girlish fondness and expectancy, to mark off the days that might

fairly be expected to intervene before her brother's return. But eagerly as she anticipated the joy of this moment, there was beneath the same roof another heart that watched the sailor's advent with a still more trembling pulse, more agitated expectation, more anxious foreboding.

The lesson which Siberia had learnt in town, had indeed sunk deep into her haughty, but affectionate and devoted spirit;—the idea of being made a matter of mercenary speculation —a mere bargain and sale—when she felt the consciousness of possessing qualities, that might unaided, have commanded the purest love from any bosom, filled her with the utmost rage.

By Charles, humble as he was, she knew herself to be adored, with a purity above all suspicion, while she would not admit, even to herself, how far that affection was returned in her own bosom. Thus in reality the question was reduced to a mere struggle between Affection, preferring one who had risen from a station beneath her; and Pride, sacrificing her own predilections for the risk of uniting herself to some titled wooer, who might perhaps think

himself lucky in finding a fine woman attached to a large fortune, but who would have been equally devoted to the fortune, even although there had not been attached to it a handsome woman.

In combat with these feelings also, there perpetually presented itself the recollection, of how greatly our hero had elevated his simple escutcheon, above that of all competitors, in gaining a mark of distinction, which none but the blood-royal of the country had obtained during the war before. And more than all, there was perpetually present to her mind, the conscious delight, that all this had been done for her sake, prompted by her image, and achieved as it were under her colours.

Between pride, admiration, affection, gratified vanity, and doubt, never perhaps was human heart more on the rack than that which bounded in the bosom of Lady Siberia. To all its varied emotions, however, a fearful climax was approaching.

Sir George Auberville was in the constant habit of reading to both the ladies at the break-

fast table whatever news related to the sea, and more especially aught that threw the least light upon Charles' expected return. One morning they heard him give a sudden exclamation, which Sir George as instantly endeavoured to suppress, and after turning very pale, they beheld him rise and leave the table. Anxious to learn what had disturbed his equanimity, usually so firm and deep-seated, they looked for the paper and found to their surprise, that Sir George had taken it with him.

In a few minutes Lady Siberia was summoned into the library: she found her uncle with the newspaper in his hand, pacing to and fro in the utmost distress, and on seeing Siberia, he abruptly remarked that he had sent for her, to break as gently as possible to Anna some unfortunate tidings of her brother.

"What!" gasped Siberia, with a change of countenance, which any one more versed than Sir George, in the mysteries of her sex, would at once have taken as a warning not to proceed. The worthy Baronet was however, so engrossed by other feelings, that this hint missed his eye, as he replied—

"Poor boy! There is too great reason to suppose, his ship has been lost with all hands on board! How shall we break this ill-fated intelligence to his sister?" as Sir George communicated these unhappy tidings, he felt himself so strongly affected, that he was glad to look away from the party whom he was addressing, in order to conceal the working of his features, by gazing from the window. Instead, however, of receiving any answer to his question, some sudden sound, caused him to look back, when, to his consternation he beheld his niece extended lifeless at his feet.

Sir George's voice at once brought Anna rushing to his assistance, and with the aid of her servants, they speedily conveyed to her room the unfortunate Siberia, who, possessed to all appearance of every thing that could make life agreeable, the mistress of perfect health, a noble heart, unrivalled beauty, and extensive riches, yet now awoke to the consciousness of life as wretched and tortured a being, as any on whom that day's sun could shine.

No sooner were the symptons of reviving

life strong enough in Siberia, to allow Anna to quit her side, than the latter flew to acquaint Sir George with the revival of his niece, and as a matter of course, to enquire what had been the intelligence which had so greatly disturbed her friend's mind, in order that she might know how to answer any questions which Lady Siberia might put. There now devolved upon Sir George the difficult charge he had been so anxious to transfer to our heroine, and after much circumlocution, and many futile endeavours, Anna was at length made to comprehend that the chief aim and object of her every hope—he who was the pride of every joyous moment she had ever known, was torn from her side—never more to be restored to her.

It has been beautifully written—

> "The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
> The oak ne'er bends, but falls for ever."

Such also was the kind of distinction, though not carried to its fullest extent, which marked the sorrows of the two friends. On the im-

perious soul of the heiress, the shock fell like lightning on some stately tower; on the gentler mind of Anna it descended like rain upon the lily; she abandoned herself to the bitterest grief, but the tears in which this found vent, watered the seeds of hope within her soul, and bade her humbly trust in Heaven, for some sunny hour that should ripen them into fruition; with Siberia, all was dark and desolate, and considerable fears were expressed by her physicians, lest some sudden affection of the brain might ensue. As soon as the first burst of agony was over, Anna flew to the couch of her friend, to render there, whatever assistance was in her power. Not even when Sir George beheld the effects of his want of caution on the mind of his niece, did the slightest suspicion of the real state of the case break on his mind. Knowing what splendid offers had been made to Lady Siberia in London, and remembering that her old suitor, the Duke, had uninvited followed her down to the sea coast, and spent a week at Cliffville, in the vain hope of proving a successful suitor,—it never for a moment

would have entered into his conception to glance at the possibility of her undoubted pride allowing her heart to wander so far beneath her station.

But no woman was thus to be deceived, especially one, young, clever, and sensitively alive to all that regarded the affections. When Anna knew what had been the intelligence which had produced so disastrous an effect upon her patroness, and more especially when she had time to turn her attention to this point, she almost started with surprise, as the truth first glanced upon her mind. Soon, however, the remembrance of one trifling fact after another, came to yield strong corroborating testimony, which she in vain tried to reject; until at length, when the whole truth was indisputably established in her belief, she hardly knew whether most to rejoice for her brother, or to grieve for her benefactress. But on this—at least she resolved, that every devotion which one woman could exhibit towards another, she would exert for the hapless being who possessed such multiplied claims upon her exertions—her love—her admiration—her gratitude.

CHAPTER XXI.

From the period described in the last chapter, the most profound gloom, the deepest melancholy, the most acute and silent sorrow, overshadowed the whole family at Cliffville. As long as it was possible to nurse the faintest hope, Anna continued eagerly to watch the papers, and confidently to predict the safe arrival of her brother, at some day, however distant; but, when month stole into month, when a year had at length elapsed, and not only no tidings were heard of the Tartar, but all the advices from the station, corroborated the fact of her loss; the faithful sister was obliged at any rate to cease expressing her wild and incredulous presentiments of our hero's safe return, however strongly she might nourish them in her own bosom.

As for Siberia, pride had induced her rapidly to struggle with her feelings on the subject, and resume her usual place in the family—but a wounded heart was not to be thus mocked, and bitterly she paid for the struggle. All Anna's well meant efforts to cultivate hope, were vain in Siberia's eye, she felt convinced that the dread fiat of death had fallen on the absent wanderer, and mingled affection, and remorse, combined to paint her in her own eyes, as the guilty cause of that death her future life would have to deplore.

For her it was he had been led to embark in the dangerous profession of the sea, by her influence he was conducted to the melancholy death which had overtaken him, and by events of her originating, was Anna thus deprived of the only natural guardian she possessed in life.

Instead of viewing Charles's late achievements over the difficulties of the service, with that exultation they so lately inspired, she recurred to them with a cold and deadly shudder, as the splendid but bitter prizes which she

had stimulated him on to win from fortune, at the price of life.

This bitter conflict of the mind, could not long continue, without involving in its ruin the frame that supported it. To the most casual observer Siberia's health gave way most rapidly, her uncle and friends in vain endeavoured to ascertain the cause; she remained resolutely impenetrable on this point, and it was only at their most urgent entreaty, that she consented to undertake a tour through the lakes, and wherever else the least object of interest could be supposed to awaken new emotions in the mind.

After a twelvemonth's absence, she returned to Cliffville a spectre of her former self; still beautiful it is true, for with such eyes and features, it was impossible that life could remain and not present a picture of surpassing loveliness; but alas, it was a beauty that seemed to poison the happiness of all who gazed on it, for it was a beauty that bespoke its speedy extinction in the grave.

On every side, from the highest opinions the country could afford, Sir George heard the same sad story. Namely, that the pitiless destroyer consumption, threatened to take from him his darling relative, if some unlooked-for chance did not lead her back to a speedy restoration of that strength which had been so mysteriously undermined.

Some whisper of this report also gained Siberia's ear, and she insisted on being allowed to die quietly at home, by the shores of beautiful and beloved Devon, instead of being dragged from one spot to another, in the vain attempt to prolong a life, which she could not enjoy, and deprived in the mean while of many of those comforts which would sooth its close.

Sir George, between the visible but uncomplaining grief of Anna, and the distracting apprehensions occasioned by the slow wasting of Siberia, was in a state of bitter mental torture. To make matters worse, he in a great degree reproached himself as the cause of Siberia's illness, from having so precipitately communi-

cated to her an event that must at least have been melancholy, if not shocking.

Even after all that had passed before his eyes, it had never once entered into the Baronet's imagination to contemplate the possibility of Siberia's illness, being really caused as it was by ill-fated affection. Perhaps he was a little less sceptical as to the existence of love than formerly, from one or two slight circumstances that had occurred to him; but that any mysterious working of that resistless feeling should have wrought the wreck before him, was a matter that came not near his contemplation.

As for Anna, we have already hinted at her suspicion of the cause of Siberia's sufferings, and long after the first memorable shock, she entertained considerable hopes that Siberia would have confided the real state of her feelings to her; but, it was this bitter struggle to conceal the wolf gnawing at her heart, that aggravated Siberia's torture, and laid prostrate before it, a mind and form both powerful in no ordinary degree.

Under these circumstances, Anna dared not to take advantage of her suspicions, in discussing so tender a subject, or give the slightest hint of her own impressions on the point; delicacy, honour, feeling, all forbade such a course. At length, one bright morning in spring, in the third year from that memorable season in London, that had proved the harbinger of so much misery to all parties, Siberia came to Anna's room, and requested the latter to accompany her in a walk on the garden terrace. The hour was about eleven, the sun was shining with great heat and brightness; the sea, the sands, the sky, the flowers, every thing looked exquisitely happy. This thought painfully struck on Anna's mind, as with a glance of grief and affection, she surveyed the drooping form beside her, and while noticing how heavily Siberia leaned upon her arm for support, observed also that a still deeper air of dejection overshadowed her speaking countenance, a more than ordinary brilliancy and wildness played in her lustrous eyes.

Siberia, after expressing to Anna with a

resigned and quiet solemnity of manner, a belief that her death was not far distant, mentioned her anxiety to confide in her friend the real cause of her present illness, with strict injunctions, that Anna should never disclose it to more than one particular individual, if an opportunity for such a disclosure should ever arrive.

Anna having solemnly and implicitly promised the most entire obedience to her friend's requests, Siberia with many blushes, but still with great candour, narrated to Anna all the torments through which she had striven so desperately for the last four years; she gave the whole rise, progress, and destroying climax, of that feeling which had blasted health, happiness, and hope; and finally adjured her gentle listener that she should on no account reveal this secret to any one but Charles himself, should he by any extraordinary turn of events, ever prove to be living; being first bound by his sister never to breathe to human being one word of such a melancholy confidence.

"That he should know," finally concluded

Siberia, "if he yet lives, how his labours and merits have been estimated, is but a fair reward. I only pray to Heaven it may stimulate him on to gain fresh honours, and that he may attach himself to some being with a happier fate than mine to share them."

Anna in reply, confessed that she had long suspected the real state of Siberia's feelings, though such suspicions she had always confined to her own bosom. She next enquired how it was that Siberia, who, hitherto, had appeared so lost to any hope of Charles's reappearance, should now at this late period, take up the conjecture. A melancholy smile for a moment irradiated the pallid face of the invalid, as she replied—

"I know you will laugh at me for what I am going to tell you; you will consider it a wandering of my mind; perhaps it is so, and, as the lamp of life grows low, the light it yields is darkly crossed by shadows. I need not tell you," and here Siberia endeavoured to turn away a face that crimsoned to the very temples. "I need not tell you, that during

the last four years, poor Charles has appeared constantly in my dreams. Last night, however, I was not sleeping—no, I have thought of it again and again, and I certainly was not asleep, for the moon beams were falling in through my window, and struggling with the light of my night lamp, and I was gazing on the spot where they fell with half closed eyes, and listening to the gentle murmurs of the sea, thinking how invariably nature shines, and smiles as it was wont, regardless of the breaking hearts within her fair domain; and then it occurred to me, on just such a night four years ago, strong and calm, and happy, in the possession of everything that could make life joyful—I met your brother, and gave him my shawl to carry; that night, I remember, as his hand touched mine in parting, the first mysterious suspicion flashed across my mind, that the pity I entertained for him was dangerous alike to his repose and mine. All these reflections were passing, I say, through my thoughts, but with a degree of rapidity as you may suppose, which no narrative can convey, when

suddenly I saw the moonlight darkened, and yet it was not obscured. I could see it still shining on the floor, but as if some transparent substance interposed, I look'd up, and there at my side stood Charles—you may well start, I felt dreadfully agitated, so much so, that though I made the strongest efforts to speak, I was wholly unable to articulate a word—that it was Charles's person that I beheld, I could not have the slightest doubt—I saw every feature most distinctly — his beautiful eyes, small, pale intellectual face, and long dark waving hair, all seemed as fresh as though we had parted but a few minutes before, on the memorable night, I have mentioned, but in every other respect he was greatly changed. I never saw him in my dreams, as I beheld him last night—he was grown taller, and far more manly, he wore a captain's uniform I observed, and his thin slight figure had acquired a degree of strength and symmetry that I could not have believed possible—I cannot express to you the agony I endured when he turned his melancholy eyes towards me, as if

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impalpable and dim, until nothing but the bright moonlight remained falling through the casement as before, and the sweet and mournful murmur of the sea beating in the distance, now filled my eye and ear! Oh, what a night I passed!—morning appeared as if it never would or could dawn again!—Or even if it should break and find me living, it could only be as some raving idiot. My brain burned till I could scarcely bear my hand upon my forehead;—again and again I bathed it in the cold water;—I prayed to sleep;—I prayed to die;—anything would have appeared relief from the horrible torment I endured."

"Why did you not call me?"

"Ah! dearest Anna, I thought of that and would have done so, but pride,—pride that has been my bane through life, and will be the main ingredient of my death—pride whispered that my secret would be endangered, if not discovered, by my summoning assistance, and I resolved to meet death,—idiotcy,—any thing,—every thing,—rather than disclose how my rebellious heart had wandered in defiance of my reason! But all is over now! With day-

light came cooler, and I trust, a better train of argument. I feel that poor Charles's spirit, or shadow, or whatever it might have been, was sent to warn me of approaching death. I cannot make out how I should rightly interpret the imploring manner in which he besought me to speak to him, but giving it the widest translation possible, I have determined to sacrifice my own feelings, as the only offering I can make to his, and to disclose every thing to you with permission to reveal to him alone, should he ever re-appear after my death, of which re-appearance I have a strange presentiment, I know not how to account for.

"When your seemingly fortunate, but oh! most ill-fated friend, finds that repose in another state, which fate and her own folly have denied to her, in this," continued Siberia, fondly entwining her arm round Anna's waist, and reposing on her neck that still exquisite countenance, from which the tears had long been falling, "when this final rest is at last granted to me, this cheek that now burns at the recital of all my weakness, will then be able to feel the sorrow and agony of a blush

no more! Then tell your brother,—tell dearest Charles,—for it is vain any longer to withhold that true title from him—tell him that I did love him, despite of all the obstacles of low estate and origin, with a love that few women have ever felt, and even I could not cherish and survive, all powerful as I once believed my mind and will to be. Yes, tell him this, and at the same time add, that when I gave him this affection, it was despite my better judgment, and because I could not help acknowledging that he was worthy of it all. When every thing is over, dearest Anna, you will find I have forgotten neither of you; but night nor day I implore you do not leave my side, till I am released.—I cannot, cannot see him again, as I beheld him last night, without power to speak or even hear what he addresses to me, and yet retain my senses, you must never leave me while I live!" and Siberia wreathed her arms round Anna's figure with such phrensy, that the latter almost feared an attack of that lunacy which Siberia seemed to apprehend.

Soothing her by every promise in her power, Anna endeavoured to shew our heroine from the internal evidence of her own story, that the occurrence of the previous night was in reality nothing more than one of her usual dreams, differing slightly from the rest, but still wholly reconcileable with nature, and simply attributable to ill health. Siberia was listening to Anna's arguments and consolations with a calm and sorrowful incredulity, when suddenly their conversation was interrupted, by the appearance at Anna's elbow, of one of the servants, with a salver, bearing a letter on it. No sooner did Anna's eye catch the superscription, than, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, she became violently agitated, and endeavoured to conceal the missive beneath the folds of her dress. With a degree of iron strength, which the other could not have believed possible, Siberia seized Anna's hand, and pinioned it immoveably, until the servant was beyond hearing, then with a fierce wildness which appeared new-born in her character, she exclaimed :—

"It is his hand writing,—I saw it, I know it,—give it me, unless you wish to slay me on the spot, with vain suspense."

Seeing that the mischief was already done, Anna relinquished the letter.—Siberia seized it—tore it open—glanced at the date and signature, exclaimed in a voice of rapture, that was never to be forgotten :—"He lives! He lives!" flung herself once more on Anna's neck and swooned.

Fortunately for Siberia, so much nursing had lately fallen to the share of her companion, that the latter had become a very tolerable leech, and being acquainted with the whole physiology of fainting fits, she rightly concluded, that no relief for Siberia's excited brain and nerves, could be half so potent, as that which Doctor Nature, that inimitable Physician, had thrown in her way, she therefore contented herself with extending Siberia's senseless form upon the bench where they had been sitting, and allowing her gradually to revive;—while her eyes hastily glanced over the letter, which, as

Siberia had declared, did indeed come from no less a person than our hero.

This prized epistle whose arrival had excited such emotions, briefly stated that the writer had just arrived in Torbay, a passenger from the West Indies, and proceeded to give the leading events that had happened to our hero, since the last period of his writing home by Admiral Roupell. After summarily capitulating the mutiny of the Tartar's crew and their ejection of their tyrannical commander, and glancing hastily over the horrible deaths, and servitude of his companions and himself, Charles proceeded to state that the remaining officers of the seventy-four with Lady Coxcomb and her servant, were finally rescued from their slavery, by the accidental arrival of a transport from India.

This vessel it seems had been detached from her convoy, and driven out of her course by a gale of wind, and making the inhospitable shores of New Zealand, had put in to refit, discovered the fact of Europeans being on the Island, and humanely obtained them by barter from the

natives. The first news that greeted Charles on his gaining this friendly vessel, was that of his promotion, more than two years before, by Order in Council, to the rank of Lieutenant, and his recent advancement from that grade to the list of Commanders. In this delightful preferment, our hero recognized at once the fulfilment of Admiral Roupell's promises to their largest possible extent, and as all the lately enslaved party were under the necessity of getting the ship's tailors to fit them out with clothes, as a step towards their once more making a decent appearance, Charles naturally caused his apparel to be made in conformity with his new rank, Sir Henry Coxcomb of course did the same; but from the hour when his former protegé, took his stand beside him on the quarter-deck, with so slight a difference in their naval rank between them, a deadly hatred seemed to take possession of Sir Henry's soul, and a thousand mean attempts to entrap and domineer over Charles, warned the latter that a storm was brewing against him in a quarter whence he had once hoped for nothing

but kindness, and gratitude. Fortunately Lady Coxcomb's afflictions had merged into a sort of moody madness, and she took neither share nor notice in or of anything. Her "sin" had indeed, "found her out," in the most cherished spot of her heart's core.—That darling child for whose proposed advantage, she had sold her soul, had perished the most hideous of deaths before her tortured and idolizing eyes, and from that hour, the sun itself was darkened with his blood to her distracted vision.

The transport—Charles went on to state—landed the late captives in Jamaica, and before our hero had been on shore one hour, the storm burst on him. Sir Henry had obtained an order to try him by Court Martial, on thirteen charges hatched at leisure during their late voyage, but all relating to events that had happened in their captivity; the chief of which were cowardice and disobedience of orders, in not helping to put the enemy to death, whereby the lives of the whole party were perilled, of many sacrificed, and the liberty of all forfeited.

Without a friend to advise or support him, Charles was almost overwhelmed. No news had ever been heard of the Tartar, and it was therefore with much reason supposed, that she had either been deserted or destroyed by her mutinous crew, or that, in their ignorance of navigation, they had been cast away. For his share in this transaction, Sir Henry and his surviving officers were first tried and acquitted; and then our hapless hero being arraigned, Sir Henry Coxcomb, by the iniquitous system of Courts Martial, stood in the double light of accuser and sole witness, and having preferred the charge he wished to substantiate, swore up to all that was necessary to prove it. His superior having discoloured the facts in the most frightful manner, it required all Charles's ingenuity and determination, to save himself from a disgraceful death: fortunately, the indubitable and almost unexampled heroism which he had previously displayed afloat, staggered his judges in their belief of his subsequent alleged cowardice on shore. Touched with compassion, they resolved to save his life, and

having acquitted him of the heavier charges, condemned him, on the minor points of disobedience and disrespectful conduct, to be cashiered: thus, after all his efforts, he was turned upon the world almost helpless, to find his way to England and redress.

In the first moments of bitter agony, he meditated bringing against Sir Henry some charge, grounded on all that he had heard and seen, relating to a crime of former times. From this, our hero's cooler thoughts fortunately dissuaded him: On reflection, he perceived, that whatever might be his suspicions, he had literally no proofs. That the failure of his accusation would stamp it as the fruit of a vile revenge, and for ever prevent him from being restored to the service. This last objection also forbade a duel, even if no other better consideration negatived it, and finally, leaving the culprit to the hands of Heaven, our hero almost heart-broken, returned to his country a beggar and a ruined man.

After commenting in passionate language on his blasted prospects, Charles expressed a deter-

mination to have an interview with his sister, and then to start for London, and endeavour to gain a restoration to his rank—but being hopeless of effecting this, against the powerful interest of Sir Henry, he was prepared to embark in some foreign service, and abandon England and all its remembrances for ever. Finally, our hero requested Anna to be at a particular spot in the garden, where the wall was low, and he at half past nine would scale it and meet her there: More especially she was charged not to mention the receipt or contents of the letter to Sir George or Lady Siberia, as, under his present circumstances, the bare idea of seeing any former friend, was torture to him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It may easily be imagined how much Anna was distressed by the receipt of the foregoing letter,—and on the return of Siberia to consciousness, how long was the consultation that they held on its contents. The idea of Charles, whose absence had been so mourned and lamented, coming to the house, and then not being seen by any one but his sister, merely because he had been made the victim of tyranny, was a proposition which Siberia perfectly scouted, and here we are bound to render the latter lady a degree of justice that is only due.

Whatever might have been her haughtiness and pride before confessing to Anna the con-

suming secret of her life, now that she had once acknowledged its existence, she seemed determined to stand all risks that the weakness of her confession might have brought upon her.

The fervent and respectful way also, in which her name and welfare were prayed for at the conclusion of Charles' letter, increased, if it were possible, the tenderness of her feelings towards him. Finally—it was determined between the two, that Anna should receive her brother at the appointed spot and hour, and that Lady Siberia should watch his safe arrival in the garden, and then hurry off to communicate the fact to Sir George, who, by the simple act of surprising the sister and brother together, as if by chance, should terminate all difficulties in the path of their reunion, after which every effort should be made to do justice to the wronged, and gain his restoration to the service.

Besides this, the main engredient in their conspiracy, there were one or two other matters

mentioned between the friends, with the details of which we need not now be delayed, but proceed at once to the history of the eventful evening.

CHAPTER XXIV.

With no slight excitement and agitation to both friends the twilight approached. Anna busied herself with uttering a thousand conjectures—framing and answering innumerable questions—chiding the tardy moments as they flew, and anticipating unmeasured happiness.

But Siberia, though still more disquieted in mind, found her feelings too deep for words; and as if crushed down by contending emotions, was unable to utter a single reply to all the other's exuberant loquacity.

At dinner, poor Sir George observed the invalid's untouched delicacies that could no longer tempt Siberia's attention, and taking it as a symptom of the progress of disease, seemed scarcely able to control his grief, and remain at table. Siberia longed to undeceive him,

but it was premature, she was therefore obliged to content herself with the knowledge that the mystery would soon be unravelled. At last the hour arrived—Siberia, in a thousand shawls, and as many preservatives, to prevent the night air from inducing her to cough, and thereby discover their plot, had been seated in a bower that overlooked the trysting spot for at least twenty minutes, when a slight noise was heard, and before Anna had reached her position, the long lost Charles had leapt down into the garden, that he had last quitted under such different circumstances.

Siberia's heart seemed to mock all controul, as she beheld Anna passionately folded in the embrace of that tall manly figure, which she had seen so exactly on the preceding evening, as she contended in her vision, in the same dress, and with the same melancholy aspect, for the quick eyes of love mocked the optician's art, and faint as the moon's rays were, not a point in the dress or person of our hero escaped Siberia's attention.

After a few minutes of mutual caressing,

which Siberia felt that she could readily have dispensed with, though she scarcely knew why, Charles, who according to the plot of the friends, ought to have allowed his sister to lead him gently in another direction, so that Siberia might escape to her uncle, now proved so refractory, that nothing less would serve him than making for the bower itself, under a pretence that the night was too damp and chilly for his sister, and the more poor Anna struggled against this course, the more resolute the young commander seemed in pursuing it; till lifting her in his arms, he fairly ran with his dear burden into the very ambush of the enemy.

As for Siberia, no words can describe her agitation when she heard the discussion, and saw the one beloved form approaching rapidly towards her side.—She tried to fly, and could not,—she looked round for some hiding nook, but none was there, save that formed by an old flower stand, and hastily throwing a neglected piece of matting over it, she darted behind this inefficient screen, her enraptured bosom throbbing so loudly, that discovery seemed inevitable,

even from that cause alone. Scarcely had our heroine made this attempt at concealment, when Charles paused at the threshold, and uttering a deep sigh, exclaimed,—

"How well, Anna, I remember this exquisite spot, when I last saw it, these jasmines and honey-suckles, were all in full bloom and beauty; these roses also thrived in profusion through those lattices. Through all the various scenes and hardships I have undergone, this scene has never once faded from my imagination: on the wide raging sea, or the dry barren rock, in the long night watches, and in my short fevered dreams, the perfume of this delicious bower, as I noticed it on that one happy night, has stolen across my senses like air from Heaven, for it always brought to my remembrance the form of that angel of the earth, Lady Siberia,—why, Anna! What is that in the corner,—there in the shadow?"

"Oh!—ahem!—that in the corner?" repeated Anna, scarcely knowing what to say, for she felt convinced that her friend must have hidden behind it—"in the corner?"

"Yes, in the corner."

"Oh, some old matting, that the gardener——"

"Oh, very well! They tell me, dearest Anna that Lady Siberia is ill. Is it, can it indeed be so? Some officious fool dared to say she was dangerously ill; but the accursed words seemed impossible for human credence—that any thing so beautiful and beloved should be endangered! Gracious Heaven, avert such a crowning calamity, during my lifetime, at least. I have often prayed since my disgrace to be spared the sin and ignominy of taking my own life, but to survive her, would indeed, be hopeless.—D— that matting Anna!—surely it stirred."

"Did it, ah? No,—yes,—just as the wind rises, perhaps it moves a little; but about Lady Siberia,—she has been very ill I admit, but she is getting better now, and as to her being in danger, never allow such a thought to cross your mind; tell me, dearest Charles, do you still entertain that passion which I know,—though you never would acknowledge it,—drove you to sea?"

"Entertain it?" repeated Charles, seating himself in the bower, and drawing Anna towards him; "out of respect for Lady Siberia never would acknowledge the passion which consumed me, though so many guessed my secret. But for you, Anna,—can you be possessed of a feeling heart yourself, and think it possible, that love once kindled for so exquisite an object, could ever afterwards know what it was either to cool or change? Do I still entertain?—alas! as the strength of the boy is to the vigour of full manhood, so does the one engrossing madness of my life, stand in relation to that passion of my youth;—I love her, I have loved, till the last pulse ceases in my heart I ever shall love her, with more than all an eastern adoration of the most prized idol.—Do Anna allow me to move that cursed matting, it startles one perpetually, with its vile shivering in the wind."

"No, no, dearest Charles," cried Anna, starting up, and clinging to her brother's uplifted arm, "the gardener."

"D——the gardener—"

"—No, but he has put it there most probably to shelter some delicate plant, and if you touch or disarrange it, he'll know immediately that some one has been here, and I shall be found out; remember Sir George would never forgive me if he knew of your return, and my concealing it."

"Well, well, let it be! but I hate to be interrupted by these trifling things, when one's whole soul is giving way beneath the pressure of a passion too deep for utterance,—would to Heaven that I did not entertain the same burning love for Lady Siberia, which as you have thus guessed, first drove me to sea. The remembrance of that most exquisite of God's creatures, has been my lodestar through the darkest night, and on the stormiest waters! The hopes of being some day worthy of approaching her, has constantly, in storm and sunshine led me on through every danger, and over every difficulty. The thoughts of her image have proved the reward of all my sorrows, and the aim of all my hopes! The most trifling article that ever belonged to, or ever was connected

with her—I have borne through griefs and trials, you could little imagine—and these, die when I will, shall be found close to the heart that shall never acknowledge any other mistress. But, now! now! what is to become of me? A ruined, disgraced, degraded man—reduced, I may say to the level—from which, for her sake, I vainly rose, how can I dare to approach her?—how ever think of her? except from that distance which is at once my greatest misery, and my only hope!"

"But, dearest Charles, you may be restored to your rank, and then—"

"Oh! impossible, you little know the interest of my oppressor, when you contemplate the probability of such a thing."

"Well, but do you know whether this attachment that now makes you so unhappy, is in any degree returned by the Lady Siberia? because, if so, love overlooks and overleaps all difficulties, and the mere fact of your having lost your rank, might prove nothing in her eyes, knowing, that for her sake, you had once won your way to the station of a gentleman."

"No, dearest Anna, though I should die a thousand deaths from disappointed passion, nothing should induce me to insult her with the tale of my affection, unless I were in a rank worthy of her. Even if she knew of all the devotion which I entertain for her pure, adored image: if she knew all my sorrows —all my sufferings, even if this heart were laid bare before her this instant, it would be more than mortal being could expect even from an angel, that she should overlook her high position, and stoop to mine.—By Heaven!—there's some scoundrel behind that matting!"—

"Stay, stay, Charles, I assure you there is not," cried Anna, interposing between him and the point towards which he was springing.

"But I tell you there is, Anna,—it is some wretch listening to what we say; I'll wring his ears from off his head.—There I see him move."

"No, my dear Charles, I assure you, you are wrong."

"But I tell you I see him,—there, I see his foot,—there, he has withdrawn it.—It is some

boy that has climbed the wall, let me pass, I say, and break his head as he well—"

"No, no, Charles, I implore you," continued Anna.—But it was in vain, despite of her entreaties, Charles in his impetuous wrath, had seized the corner of the frail matting, and with one single movement of his arm, tore it down from its curtained position, and there, in the moonlight—pale—worn,—and weeping, but still transcendantly lovely, stood Lady Siberia herself, with her hand extended towards him.

Amid the host of conflicting emotions, on either side, speech for a time seemed lost to both. At length Charles, fearful how far he might have offended his divinity, sank at her feet, and clasping the proffered hand, passionately covered it with kisses.—Lady Siberia too, was deeply agitated. Bending over Charles's head, and speaking in a voice, low, almost as a whisper, but still more sweet to him than all the music of the spheres, she answered the last observation he had made in reference to herself, by saying,

"An angel might not do so, but indeed a woman can."

Charles would have made some slight sacrifice to have found words of reply, to a sentiment so generous,—but language had flown from him.

A sensation of choking, arising from mingled affection, delight, and surprise, repressed each effort at a word.—He turned round to look in his extremity, for Anna.—

—By some wonderful law in nature, however, which both Philosophers and Mathematicians have forgotten to lay down, Anna had suddenly become a vanishing quantity.—But the loss was not irreparable. Though Anna had flown from them in their distress, Nature was present in all her omnipotence.—Another instant, and the long severed lovers were folded in each other's arms!

CHAPTER XXV.

Anna, who at sundry times and in divers places, has had the impertinence to declare that her knowledge of love has been very slight, still on the occasion to which we referred in the last chapter, seems to have recognized the disease with sufficient accuracy to have allowed Siberia and Charles a full hour and a half, before she returned to the happy bower, to hint that it was nearly half past eleven o'clock, instead of a quarter after nine as they supposed,—and in short that it was high time to concert the appearance of Charles before Sir George.

For this purpose Siberia retired to her room to try and efface from her eyes the tell-tale evidences of past emotion, while Anna clasping her brother's arm, hurried him into the house to meet from Sir George a welcome

that expressed itself in a perfect tempest of delight; and then, that no more shocks might be given to the frame of the invalid, Anna, at the especial request of the veteran, kindly undertook to break to Siberia the intelligence of Charles's arrival.

Extraordinary as it may appear, this did not prove the most difficult of tasks, and the noble heiress made her appearance and welcomed the late absentee with a mode of the strictest propriety. Strange as it certainly did appear to Sir George, from this hour Lady Siberia's health took a wondrous alteration. No more ghosts were seen at night, and far more gentle and less frequent sighs agitated the tapers and endangered the existence of the fire; her faultless figure came back, with wonderful rapidity, to its former beautiful rounded outline, her eyes resumed their pristine and tranquil luxuriance of lustre, the rose once more opened its carmine to the sun upon her cheek, while with a puzzled air and yet with a lurking smile about the corner of his mouth our esteemed friend Doctor Gossip declared he

saw no immediate prospect of consumption. In the mean while Anna had privately written to the Duke of Diddlebury, and having given a short statement of her brother's case—though not as it related to Lady Siberia, be it understood—she reminded him of the frequently repeated offers of his influence, which he had been accustomed to volunteer in favour of Charles, when the sister's influence with Siberia was considered worthy of gaining by the ducal suitor, and at once boldly requested his interference to get our hero reinstated in the service. To the surprise of every one, in a few posts, down came one of those exciting admiralty letters, four feet long by two and a half wide, with a seal the size of a dinner-plate in the centre, and which, when Charles opened, he found to contain not only his restoration to the service, but his promotion to post-rank.

On the following day, Siberia summoned courage to resolve on a disclosure of the state of the case between herself and our hero, and her determinations thereupon, to Sir George Auberville.

Having waited till they were *tête a tête*, after breakfast, the niece in a voice that was strangely out of tune, made one or two attempts to request of her uncle an interview in the library, that solemn family place, where all vital matters are discussed. The words were finally however chained upon her lips, by Sir George, in an abrupt, hurried, confused, flurried, unusual style, preferring a prayer for the same favour from his niece.

Siberia, imagining Sir George had obtained possession of her secret, gave a silent consent, and followed the gallant Baronet to that study, where no one studied, much in the spirit and manner of the unfortunate victim of the law, who takes a "last little excursion" to the drop.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In solemn silence Sir George led the way to the library. In affected carelessness, and self-possession, Lady Siberia followed.

"Ah!" muttered the last, "I see now what is intended—but it can have no effect. This is an effort of family pride in my good uncle to prevent what he will term my throwing myself away, or to forward what he will call those 'just expectations of a suitable alliance,' which my family have a right to entertain. No!—Thank Heaven, I have had quite enough of such folly. An admirable plan, truly, for insuring the greatest amount of wretchedness to the greatest possible number.—No, no, none of that. I will be resolute. He will call me obstinate, let him. In the end he must ap-

prove my choice.—In marriage you can only consult the happiness of two, then what can be more insane or wicked than to plan or enter an alliance where the only parties whose inclinations are never to be considered, are those whose welfare or misery must depend on the issue? No! my word is given, and my heart too—no argument shall turn me,—I—"

"Will you allow me to hand you a chair Lady Siberia."

Lady Siberia bowed. This freezing politeness in her nearest relation, boded no good, and evidently made out the case she had been previously arguing. With a profound curtesy, Siberia let fall some words which might, or might not have passed for "Thank you, Sir George," and sank upon the soft velvet, for a few seconds as a matter of form. But it was form only, she was too deeply agitated to remain quiet, and stealing presently to one of the windows, fixed her adorable eyes upon the ever rolling ocean, saying as she did so,—"Illimitable hypocrite!—I have recovered from your tyrant deeps, the pearl I once so madly

threw away, no thanks to my own skill; but it shall indeed be a cunning tongue that ever tempts me to risk the prize once more upon your troubled waters."

"My dear Lady Siberia!" with much hesitation, commenced the Baronet, from one of the easy chairs, making a desperate effort to begin the conversation which both had sought, and yet both shunned.

"Yes, my dear Sir George, I am all attention," replied Siberia, in an assumed indifference of tone, that had quite the opposite effect from that it was meant to possess, namely, of inducing the speaker to proceed. Sir George instantly rose from his chair, uttered a half suppressed psha, and took up his position in the other window. He also gazed upon the sea; but we may suppose with different sensations, that is, if we compare the words of the niece and uncle, those of the latter being simply.

"D——n this wind, its got round to the Norrard again!" Lady Siberia being, we fear, somewhat indifferent at this moment whether the wind were d——d or not, said nothing,

while Sir George, who found the style nautical, as little likely to induce polite discussion, as the style courtly, amended his declaration by a special cough, and this over, returned once more to the charge.

"I was going to observe, my dear Lady Siberia—ahem,—that—in fact—that is—John, the stupid hound, has taken away the coal-skuttle—excuse my ringing the bell."

"Oh! certainly, Sir George," the bell was rung—the fuel was brought, and piled upon the fire, though from the burning mass of cannel coal already heaped up within the grate, bread have been most comfortably baked in the coolest corner of the room before.

As soon as the servant had retired, Sir George rose, and taking his niece by the hand, said, in what she thought, with much gratitude, was a very kind and feeling tone, "You see, my dear Lady Siberia this is—is—ahem, a very delicate matter." Siberia, thought it was, and simply bowed a reply, while the other proceeded, "that is, you know, the—the subject on which weare met to talk together."—Siberia bowed once more.

"Now you know—that—that in short, I never was what Brutus has been termed, an orator, and, therefore, to be brief, as you ladies are always at home in the talking department, and you know perfectly the matter which we are met to discuss, do, pray, shorten an interview, which I feel to be an exceedingly delicate one, as I said before, as far as you are concerned, and let me know what your sentiments are on the subject. I then think that I may fearlessly assert—I shall have little or no difficulty in converting you to my way of thinking."

"Why, truly, Sir George," commenced Siberia, in reply, putting on a most determined air, "though I must confess your request is not a little singular, seeing that you yourself desired this."—

"Well, well, but I put it to you, my dear girl, was it not necessary, before so important a family step was decided on, one way or the other, that we should be in possession of one another's sentiments?"

'Certainly."

"Very good, and since you admit thus much, I suppose you will not deny also that at my time of life, and standing in the relationship I do to you, I may not unfairly look to you for some consideration, and even tolerance of my sentiments and feelings, and though a compromise—"

"Sir George, I warn you in setting out, there can be no compromise in matters of the heart, and for my own share in the transaction, I resolutely assert that there shall be no compromise."

"—Well—well—It is idle to inflame one another's minds with marked language—I approached this matter, because I considered it my duty to do so, but believe me, I give you full credit for the prejudiced, I may say blind adherence, with which you follow up your opposition to my wishes, as to this marriage—for it is vain to shun the fact that a marriage is contemplated—

"There can be no use in shunning such a fact."

"Exactly, then, the only question is, how far it is qualified by existing circumstances, and

the difference of rank between the parties? now I must say I think that the feeling which actuates you on this question, is carried to a ridiculous excess."

"Ridiculous or not, Sir George, I am the best judge of those feelings, and I tell you candidly, that nothing shall induce me to alter them; it only, therefore, remains for you to say whether or not, in consideration of the interest that I take in the matter, you will consent, for the sake of my happiness, to waive your own wishes and acquiesce in mine, even if you cannot enter into them."

"Well, then, truly Lady Siberia, since you put it to me thus peremptorily, I must take leave to remind you that there is a considerable difference in our positions, which you wholly overlook. It is true that your sex entitles you to every courtesy, every gentleness, and kindness, but I can scarcely see how you, so much younger a person, can expect me to give up everything to your fancies; and if you come to the discussion of happiness, you must forgive me in the present case, if I think there is some

one's happiness to be looked at as well as your own."

"I have heard of such arguments having been used before to-day, Sir George, and must confess, with me, at any rate, they have no sort of weight."

"I am sorry to hear you give utterance to an assertion containing so little that is generous to any one except yourself.—I certainly had hoped a very different termination to this interview; but since you are thus resolved not to listen to my views, I feel myself restricted, by every proper principle, from supporting yours. I am sorry to see that our paths through life diverge—mine may not, cannot be far protracted, and therefore it is that the diversity gives me the more pain."

"It cannot occasion you more pain than it does me, still, after the decided manner in which you have expressed your intention to thwart my wishes, I do not see that any other course is left but for us to separate."

As Siberia said this, she swept towards the door with a stern haughty air, her brow

seemingly as passionless as marble, while her proud, warm heart was "fit to break." She longed to rush to the sacred privacy of her own pillow, and there relieve her surcharged breast by a long burst of tears.

Nor was Sir George less moved, when he saw, in the act of parting for ever from his side, that brilliant and beloved being, who, though acting very unkindly towards him, still reigned upon a throne of thrones most deep within the affectionate recesses of his gallant heart. Turning towards the door, before his niece could gain it, he held out his hand, and while his voice did not present the steadiest tones in the world, he said, "At least we will not part in anger, dearest Siberia, though our heads may reason differently, our hearts will always beat in unison. It is hard for the old man to stoop and beg a favour, but of a woman, and one too so beautiful, there can be no disgrace in the entreaty. Though you will not cheer it by your approval and concurrence, at least prevent the public tittle-tattle of a family disagreement, and grace our marriage with your presence."

"*My* presence! *Our* marriage! Of what are you talking? *Whose* marriage do you mean?"

"Why *my* marriage of course, Siberia, whose marriage did you think we had been talking about?"

Rather an awkward pause followed this question. Loftily as Siberia carried her matchless head, it gradually drooped towards the earth, the colour slowly mounted into her cheek, forsook its station, and again resumed its pride of bloom. With a manner strangely contrasting with her late fierceness of self-will, she answered, "Why, my dear uncle, I hardly know how to answer your question, but I really thought we were discussing *my* marriage."

"*Your* marriage! and with whom?"

"Captain James," bashfully answered Siberia, in a whisper that was meant to be a reply.

"*Captain James!*" re-echoed the veteran, with the utmost surprise letting fall Siberia's hand, "Well, after that wonders cannot cease! My dear girl, I am delighted to know that you

have had soul and head sufficient to make so good a choice, and courage enough to give your choice effect,—more especially since now you can have no objection to my own alliance. Clearly you think with me—for one whose fortunes do not compel him to fight the stern and selfish battle of the world, one hour of true affection is worth a life of every other joy!"

"It is, it is indeed," gasped Siberia,—"I may have been late or obstinate in finding out that sacred truth, but knowing it as I now do, nothing shall ever tempt me to wander from its blessed philosophy. Oppose your marriage, my dearest uncle? No, not for worlds, what could suggest so improbable a thing? And who then is the lady to whom I am to have the delight of tendering my affections?"

"That is a delight you are not to have, since you have enjoyed it long, long since. I fear your old uncle, not content with renouncing all the heresies of his past youth, has presumed too greatly on the strength of his benedictine propensities, but since the lady, as you term her, pardons the temerity, it is hoped the rest of

the world will be equally condescending.—Who is she, do you ask?—say rather who can she be but your own friend, Captain James's sister, Anna?"

We have said that Siberia's excited nature felt as if nothing could restore its tranquillity, save a copious flow of tears, and when the name of her future relative was given, she uttered a faint 'thank Heaven,' and throwing herself on her uncle's shoulder, wept out the fulness of her heart there—adding one instance the more to the numbers that the world presents at every turn, of daring and lofty spirits, which sternness or ill-nature harden into adamant, but which one single touch of kindness or good feeling, makes soft as the dew of Heaven.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We fear that the period has now arrived, at which, despite all lingerings to the contrary, we must be content to bid our kind readers, God speed! Into the scope of our present tale, it never entered to make a point of any mystery connected with the identity of our characters. It was desirable, if not necessary, on the contrary, that the reader should see through the thin veil which covered the parentage of Charles, to accompany him through his struggles with that interest, which it is hoped he has not altogether failed to create. Our story has turned rather on the struggle of the passions in the breast of our heroine, and the glorious strife of integrity, industry, and courage, in the person of our hero, amid the heavy sorrows we all

have to encounter in this world. This fight done, and the victory achieved, we fear we should vainly look for pardon at any hand, did we attempt to make an unnecessary puzzle or delay, in narrating the few leading events that influenced the destiny of the gallant Charles, and the exquisite creature who honoured him by becoming his bride; thus crowning his felicity with all the choicest accessories to delight, that even the least reasonable mortal might desire to find in—The Captain's Wife.

Sir George Auberville, among other qualifications, was, as we have seen, a person of much business-like energy, and like a true sailor, having once come to a determination, neither thing nor person could successfully oppose him, until his resolution was carried into effect. Within a short space of time from the day in question, the delighted pairs were married in London by special licence, each choosing their own separate route; Sir George and Lady Auberville bending their way towards the north; Captain Charles and Lady Siberia retracing their steps westward, though not

exactly to Dawlish, for the honey-moon. The latter couple had gained the neighbourhood of Barnstable, when a special messenger overtaking Charles, brought him a letter of importance. The packet contained an enclosure from a high official authority in Jamaica, stating that Lady Coxcomb had caught an epidemic fever, and had died, but that previously to her death she had returned to consciousness, made a full and extraordinary confession, implicating in the murder of his elder brother, Sir Henry, who had just sailed for Halifax, and disclosing the fact that Charles and Anna were the children of the deceased Baronet.—Lady Coxcomb having at the same time indicated the fullest clues for the establishment of those facts. In the same packet, which had been forwarded from Cliffville by the butler in consequence of the letters having come from abroad, and being marked to be delivered with all haste, was an anonymous note which Charles at once recognized to be in Sir Henry's handwriting. It simply requested our hero to put in the papers, a statement, that Sir Henry Coxcomb

had on a certain date died at sea off the island of St. Lucia. The note then went on to affirm that Charles was the next heir, and requested him to assume the title, and take possession of the estates.

After all the sacrifices which Siberia had made for him, it was indeed a delightful gratification for our hero to be enabled to show her that she had not mated with one unworthy of her in birth as well as from any other consideration; while on her part, the embers of a former pride once more warmed her generous bosom, on reflecting that her's had been the eye to detect, and the heart to reward oppressed birth and merit under all disguises.

Resolving to be guided by Sir George's advice, and not by the anonymous hints of an assassin, even though a repentant one, our hero evinced no hurry either to assume the title, or to seize the estates of his late ill-fated father, but when months elapsed, and to all pursuit and enquiry the death of Sir Henry became confirmed, and even the Admiralty recorded its authenticity in their books, the

necessary steps were at length taken, and Sir Charles and Lady Siberia, in the full bloom of an exquisite summer, set off to visit and take possession of those broad lands, to which our hero could already boast as beautiful an heir as ever yet called forth the pride and tenderness of a mother. For the rest of the lives both of Anna and of Sir Charles, the morning of their days had known too much of storm and tempest, not to be gilded throughout the rest of their existence with the warmest sunshine.

As for the other characters, upon whose lives our story has temporarily touched, they all expanded cheerily in the noon-tide of our hero's well deserved success. Charles, when in Dawlish, a frequent occurrence, rarely passed a day without buying or ordering some book of Abel Morris; who in return—though this scarcely need be added—took care to cheat him well for so doing.

Touching Mrs. Tyler, our hero had too great a regard for his duties, not to settle upon her, at an early date, a handsome annuity, "free

from the debts, liabilities, management, or control of, her present or any future husband." A step that even produced the magical effect of transforming into something like a civil savage "Noisy Ned;" while the latter, upon a too liberal allowance from his still generous and once ill-used wife, most entirely "dropped the shop," became "*sutor ultra crepidum*" in every sense, assumed the chair potential at the Red Dragon, and legislated not only for the whole of this world, but the next.—Falling back, whenever hard driven in argument, upon the forged authority of his "late pupil, Sir Charles James Auberville; what was, you understand, Sir Charles Coxcomb, only he took the name of Auberville out of affection to the family." Whereby sundry occasional hearers, departed on their way, marvelling that a scholar of so peculiar a breed, should be able to get pupils at all, especially from amid the ranks of the Baronetcy; and most considerably pitying the said Sir Charles, as one, likely to be somewhat deficient in the more refined and polished parts of education.

Thus dispensing to all around them an ample share of that prosperity and happiness in which they themselves rejoiced, our friends so took the surest steps not only of swelling their own enjoyment to the highest point, but the best and wisest propitiatory offering which could induce a merciful Omnipotence to keep it there.

It was on the fifth anniversary of their marriage, that Charles at an early hour, entered his wife's boudoir at Cliffville, his hand filled with the delicious violets he had been gathering for her bouquet. To his still enraptured eye, that revolving space had only brought fresh witcheries to grace the form that had ever reigned the sole divinity of his idolatry.

"Julia has learnt a new lesson for her papa," said the delighted wife and mother, gently taking the flowers, from her husband's hand, to place them in her bosom, thanking him silently, but so sweetly! for the gift, with eyes that formed a perfect match beside the azure blossoms.

Charles took the beautiful little twin upon

his arm, while his throbbing heart and moistened eyes, bore witness to the truth of her young lips, as she repeated Sir George's words, "ONE HOUR OF TRUE AFFECTION, IS WORTH A LIFE OF EVERY OTHER JOY!!"

FINIS.

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